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ABSTRACT

Intended for elementary school teachers in all subject areas wanting to learn more about what is known concerning the teaching of writing, this book summarizes numerous presentations made over the past four years by the many teacher/consultants working with the Bay Area Writing Project. Following introductory materials, the first section of the book examines students' writing, discussing holistic writing assessment and looking at children's writing samples to determine appropriate goals for each grade. The second section of the book focuses on the teaching of writing, exploring various philosophies and presenting nine teaching paradigms that include writing activities. The third section reviews the works of well-known researchers in the field of writing, including James Moffett and James Britton. Appendixes contain sample topics and essays from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, a discussion of sentence combining, and a discussion of the rhetoric developed by Francis Christensen. (HTH)

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TEACHING WRITING K-8

Jack Hailey

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For Celia, Celina, and Celeste

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FOREWORD

THE BAY AREA WRITING PROJECT

Teaching Writing K-8 by Jack Hailey summarizes for elementary teachers scores of presentations made over the past four years by the many Teacher/Consultants working with the Bay Area Writing Project and should prove a valuable guide for teachers wanting to know more about what is known about the teaching of writing.

But the writing project offers this caution: No single idea described in print can replace the experience of a workshop where a teacher, working with other teachers, introduces that idea, illustrates it with examples of student writing, discusses the questions and concerns of those teachers present, and, most importantly of all, asks the teachers to try it out themselves. It is always important that teachers write to their own assignments. They must experience, as writers, what it is that they are asking of their students.

Hopefully teachers will use this book and make it their own by adding to it, challenging it, and modifying it. It should help teachers formulate their own district programs in composition, but *Teaching Writing K-8* is not a substitute for that process. District programs must be designed by the teachers working in the varied districts in California and elsewhere. "Reinventing the wheel," in other words, is usually necessary for any real professional growth.

James Gray, Director
University of California, Berkeley
Bay Area Writing Project

FOREWORD

THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND APPLIED RESEARCH CENTER

The mission of the Professional Development and Applied Research Center (PDARC) is to explore the components which contribute to learning at all levels—early childhood to adult. There are three components: The Learner (L), Instruction (I), and Subject Areas (S). Research and application in these interrelated areas can promote, for the teacher, a comprehensive approach to daily classroom situations and educational problems. The interwoven rings link the relationships of the themes in such a way that if any one ring is broken, the entire concept falls apart.

The *Learning about...Series* is being developed through the resources of PDARC. The research and development dimensions are longitudinal and involve a breadth of research and field personnel. The major objectives of this series are to assist beginning as well as experienced teachers in becoming regular evaluators of their own instruction and to transfer research knowledge into practical, effective, and cohesive techniques.

Within each of the three themes described above, instructional resource books have been developed to help teachers become aware of and improve upon their teaching skills. Each book covers a particular topic related to one of the themes and includes exercises to assist in developing skills and incorporating knowledge of subjects into teaching. Each book also provides pertinent research and a comprehensive bibliography for those who wish to study the subject further.

Writing K-8

Both teachers and university faculty have expressed deep concern that inadequate attention has been focused on the need to teach young children how to write. *Teaching Writing K-8* is the outcome of two projects which addressed that concern. The first was a staff development program for elementary school teachers in Moraga, California, and the second was a curriculum development project to produce a resource book for all teachers K-8. The book is a resource appropriate for beginning teachers as well as experienced teachers in all subject areas. Instructors will find suggestions which enrich the teaching of their subject areas and which facilitate the integration among subjects. *Teaching Writing K-8* is a natural nucleus around which to build a staff training program.

A descriptive brochure on all PDARC publications is available upon request to PDARC, Department of Education, 1650 Tolman Hall, UC Berkeley, California, 94720.

Lawrence F. Lowery
Assistant Dean
Professional Development and
Applied Research Center
University of California, Berkeley

PREFACE

I follow time-honored advice, I have saved this preface until the last--a plane trip home the day before a final conference with editors at Instructional Labs. I need inspiration and look for a detail that will start me writing well, something concrete. Over my neighbor's shoulders I see the lines of a novel: "Serina's hot, Latin temper raised her temperature a few degrees." Little help there. I look away, out the window. Are the clouds scudding at my feet? Are the wheat fields waving, waving encouragement or jeering at my folly: "You a writer? Me a crepe suzette."

And while I ponder my writer's block, longing to sculpt it into a David of Prefaces, I think of last night's dinner when I ventured to tell a friend that I'd finished a book since our last meeting a year ago. "It must feel great to have it finished."

"Indeed it doesn't," said I morosely, "now I have to acknowledge its flaws. When I began, my audience was the world, the book was going to change teaching. And I would write well: words would be so happy with the order I gave them, they would clap their serifs. Nothing pulls down my vanity like a finished piece of writing."

My inspiration today is to push past the moroseness and examine the feelings I had while doing the writing. In addition to the hope--and hubris--of my first day's work on the manual, there was the delight of doing it, the delight of finishing dinner dishes quickly so I could hurry to get writing, and the delight of discovering it was taking shape—as on a trip when the landscape suddenly changes and urban concrete abutments give way to green hills.

And why was it a delight? Well, I'll tell you. Because writing is full of rewards. It gives me a reason to read—what will I write about this theory, this essay, this book, this exercise, this child's poem. It forces me to think, puzzle, and decide—to take one side or another or to sit judiciously on the fence of disinterest. It gives me a chance to engage in a dialogue of sorts with teachers, critics, journalists, pundits...it means I have to scrutinize the writings and the talk of close friends confident in their opinions about teaching and writing. To think, to reason, to decide, to engage, to scrutinize—what more can I ask of any activity? And now I have the pleasure of a record of that undertaking.

Toward the end of this book, I report some British teachers' answers to the question "Why write?" They compare writing to talk, and they appreciate the leisure, the privacy, the opportunity to try different voices, and the record which writing provides. They 'it the naol on the 'ed, do they not?

I remain hopeful that this book will give thought to teachers--ideas, methods, inspiration even. I have tried to suggest ways that writing can be as thought-provoking and exhilarating to elementary-school children as it is to me. And I have insisted throughout that writing should be near the center of the curriculum, helping us get at the center, which is exploration, discovery, and precision.

The airplane is now approaching Kansas City, a day after a terrible flood. The underside of the clouds is burnt, fields are smeared with silt. They look as if rain has ripped off their green robe.

LOOKING AT STUDENT WRITING

I

INTRODUCTION

Teaching Writing K-8 is a resource book for teachers. The discussion is in three parts: holistic writing assessment, which starts from actual examples of student writing rather than from precepts about writing; detailed examples of writing assignments; and a review of the state of the art in writing instruction and related research.

I begin the discussion of teaching writing to young children by describing holistic assessment and by analyzing samples of student writing. By doing so, I hope to convey how important it is that teachers regard themselves as expert judges and their students as the best source of information for teaching decisions. Teachers should analyze their students' writing, and each other's writing, rather than rely on precepts in grammar books, or theoretical continuua of instruction. Only after teachers have carefully studied the actual writing of children should expectations for student writing be set.

In the middle section, attention goes to designing writing tasks that embody thinking processes and assignments that assist students to reach the goals and expectations teachers set for them. I outline a personal philosophy about writing, then describe nine paradigms for writing activities that carry out the tenets of the philosophy. While the nine are not in an order of significance, the first two are the most important: the cycle of prewriting-writing-postwriting-rewriting activities, and the idea of writing across the curriculum. The first paradigm assists children to understand the purpose, audience, and most appropriate voice for a piece of writing; the second moves writing out from the arena of language arts into the center of all inquiry. For example, writing becomes the recording device for observations in science class, for discussions in social studies class, or for reactions after a field trip. In this way science teachers, art teachers, and current events teachers are also composition teachers.

The last section provides summaries of key findings by educators and researchers and connects these findings to elementary-school classrooms.

In my attention to critical initial questions about teaching writing, I have not enough space to discuss other important subsequent issues: for instance, I address the subject of teacher response only in passing or through implication, I say little about setting up peer evaluation and editorial processes, and I omit research on the teaching of writing mechanics. For these three important issues, the bibliography should suggest directions for inquiry.

1. HOLISTIC ASSESSMENT

Teachers can learn a great deal from each other and from the children they teach. With other teachers, they can discover common goals and shared standards for children; from children they can discover appropriate expectations. A child's ability to write depends on many mental qualities in addition to knowing and understanding the rules of spelling and mechanics. Organization, logic, enthusiasm, humor, perspective and vivid detail may count for more in a piece of writing than the paper's neatness or conventional format.

WHAT IS HOLISTIC ASSESSMENT?

"Holistic" is a term derived from this assessment method's emphasis on a reader's response to an entire essay rather than to separate aspects such as style, content, or mechanics.[1] In a holistic assessment, a group of teachers swiftly read stacks of student papers, giving each a score. Once scoring is complete, the teachers can discuss in detail the papers and the shared response. Through scoring and discussion, teachers share each other's values in writing and learn from children the appropriate time to expect or to emphasize particular thinking and composing skills. Holistic assessment presents teachers with an excellent opportunity to study the writing of children in a supportive context of inquiry with fellow teachers.

Teachers of composition often evaluate student writing with a red pencil in hand--marking misspelled words, poor punctuation, awkward sentences, fragments, run-ons, mixed metaphor, undotted i's, and incorrect diction. We call this response "correcting." It can reflect a teacher's expectation of different students and sometimes includes the individualization of comments.

In holistic evaluation, teachers do not utilize these marking approaches. Instead, the teacher responds to the entire piece of writing with one score. It is the only mark the teacher puts on the paper. Usually the scale goes from one to four or from one to nine.

The reader will now have an opportunity to try holistic scoring.

The following are four exemplary papers written by children in primary grades. The teacher showed the children a magic wand made from a stick, a cardboard star and tinfoil, and said, "Pretend this is a magic wand. Tell a story about it." The instructor spelled words for children who requested help. There was no time limit.

Directions: Read the four papers and score them holistically: give a 4 to the best paper, a 3 to the next best, a 2 to the next, and a 1 to the weakest paper. Read them quickly trusting your impressions.

[1] My introduction to holistic assessment and its myriad possibilities came from unpublished inservice presentations, at the University of California in summer 1976, by Kate Blickhahn of Drake High School in Marin (California) and by Ed White of California State University, San Bernadino. This discussion of holistic assessment also benefited from extensive suggestions Miles Myers offered me.

A.

(the banik man.)
ous ya Doh a tim
the banik man Lift up a bi
ding . His puows wr
runing o owt stay Brok

Hey did the End

The Unhappy Dragon

There once was a boy named Wilbur and a knight. Wilbur lived in a castle with his father who was a knight. Wilbur wished that he could become a knight.

One night while he was sleeping a fairy came into Wilbur's room and tapped her magic wand on Wilbur.

Next morning when Wilbur woke up Wilbur's dad said "it's time you became a knight. Today we will slay a dragon." Wilbur was shocked. Wilbur's dad said "the dragon lives at the end of the valley in a cave. It will be a long journey." So Wilbur and his dad set off.

They rode across the valley on horses. They came to a cave and got off their horses. They went in and found the dragon weeping. Wilbur asked the dragon why he was crying. The dragon said "oh every day people come and try to slay me." Sniff sniff.

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"I wish I had a master." Sniffed the dragon. I'll be your master said wilbur. The dragon wiped his eyes and thanked Wilbur. So all of them had dragon-burgers and went home. Wilbur showed the dragon a court yard. "this is your home" said Wilbur. He stayed for years and years. In winter when the furnace is cold the dragon gave fire. Wilbur liked his pet very much he named him Sapphire. They had great times together.

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C.

D.R. Micksteveinsan whrkt on an elecktronick wand for his magic show. the frst time I try it I dowt it but it whrkt. then one day wile he was practesing I took it! wave it three times and I VANISHT I felt dizy and landid with a crash

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

then I was 5000006100 years
in the fuchr then I saw a 3 hed
my pistl was repast by a ray MONSTR
gun I zapt him with it! it fell with
a crash!! and the wand was destroi
I am still hair and =½

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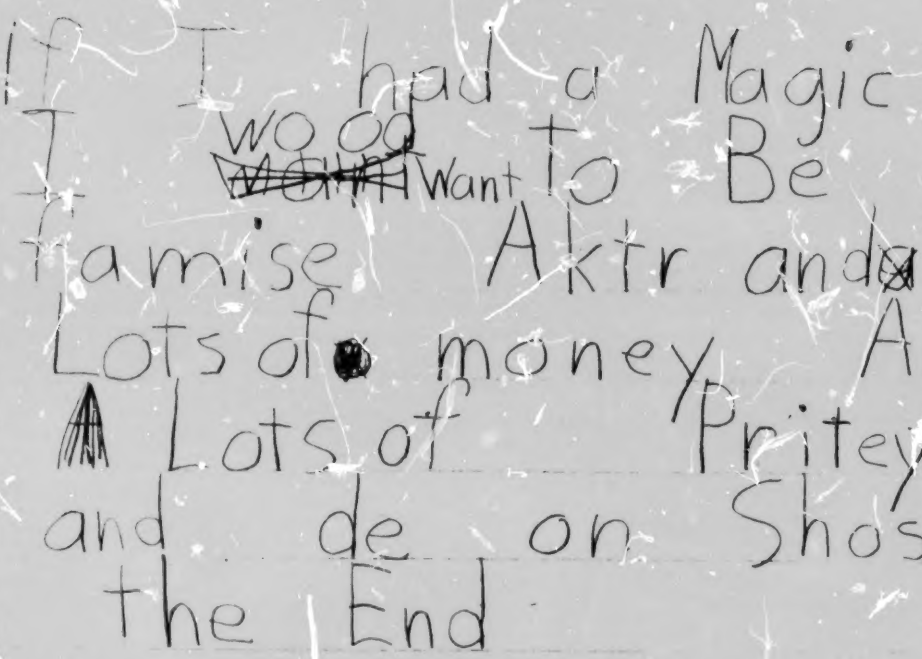
If I had a Magic Wand
I wood Want to Be a
famise Aktr and Make
Lots of money And have
Lots of Pritey Dresis
and de on Shose
the End

Because each reader is urged to select one paper which is "best," one which is "next best" etc., readers begin to think in terms of the entire point spread.

The following examples, however, are papers which fall somewhere in the middle.
Directions: Read and score these, distinguishing each as a "2 or a "3."

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E. 10

I have a magick wand
an it can trne dog's in to
cat's and cat's in to dog's so
cat's will be chasing dog's.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

F.

if I hal a magic wand I
would use it two go two hawaii
and I would come back all tan

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

G.

I have a magic wand. And I wish for enything I want. Evry Sonday Somtims I whish for mony when I sleep One evning when I was whishing it didnt come true in the morning.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

H.

My Magic Wand

One day I walking thru the wood I saw something on the ground and I ran towards it It was a Magic Wand! I picked it up and brought it home

When I told my mother that I found a magic wand she didn't believe me. So I went back to the woods, and sat down on a log and tried to make a wish with my magic wand. I wished for a big castle and guards all around it Suddenly my wish came true. And I lived in the castle I lived the happyest life. After that I turned the wand up.

13

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For your information, other teachers have given these scores to the papers:

A. The Bonik Man 1
B. The Unhappy Dragon 4
C. Dr. Micksteveinson 3
D. If I had...Aktr 2
E. I have...cat's in to dog's 2
F. If I had...Hawaii 2
G. I have...every Sunday 3
H. My Magic Wand 3

After a holistic reading of several anchor papers such as these, a group of teachers can compare scores. (Anchor papers are pre-selected papers which the group reads in order to develop a scale.) A discussion of the papers helps teachers clarify the holistic evaluation process. Well-chosen anchor papers quickly demonstrate the general agreement teachers share when holistically assessing student writing. The teachers then proceed to read and score stacks of essays.

The procedures and the discussions which follow the scoring help teachers to clarify expectations held for their students and to decide when to emphasize certain writing skills. Teachers are then able to draft minimal competencies in composition—a task many faculties are setting for themselves.

WHY DO IT?

An annual holistic writing project can give important information to teachers, to district administrators and evaluators, and to students. The benefits to teachers are many. The project orients teachers to the task of teaching writing, helps them internalize the characteristics of good writing, and brings them together to discuss substantive curriculum issues. Once established, these discussions tend to continue throughout the year.

A holistic writing project also assists teachers to set standards for excellence and competence in student writing. Setting standards concerns many school boards, administrators, and parents. By developing a holistic assessment, teachers can say, "Here's what we are doing to establish these standards: they are not arbitrary but are based upon students' actual work and upon teachers discussing student writing within a process used by the Educational Testing Service and the National Assessment of Educational Progress for writing assessment."

During the project, teachers of many different styles of writing discover that they give remarkably similar scores to students' work. If such unanimity is absent at the outset, the process of setting up the project and scoring papers generates a set of criteria everyone adopts. To complete the project, teachers must answer the question, "Of what does skill in writing consist?" Teachers of different grade levels may answer the question differently, but at each grade level or pair of grades, the process produces agreement. (See, for example, tables of results of two county-wide writing assessments, Tables 1,2,3,4, pp. 29-32. One set is from Santa Clara County, California; the other is from Jefferson County, Colorado.)

Producing criteria for writing and then scoring papers using those criteria help teachers in assessing student achievement. If teachers carry out the project annually, they will be able to gauge the progress of individual students and of the student body: how well is the school's composition curriculum assisting students to master written communication?

Each year the project yields a set of criteria at each participating grade level. Teachers at every level can see what teachers value and students accomplish at other grades. This continuum of writing skills assists teachers to decide which aspects of writing to emphasize, to encourage, or to expect at a given grade. Having a continuum of skills gives teachers a sense of the team effort possible across grade lines. No one year is responsible for all writing skills.

Teachers, who are increasingly pressed to teach basics (such as handwriting, spelling, and mechanics), have a vehicle to show student progress, to indicate the place of mechanical skills in the development of writing proficiency, and to demonstrate that there is more to writing than mechanical correctness.[2]

Once a holistic assessment is an annual occurrence, teachers can share results with students. After teachers score the papers and write up descriptions of "4" papers, "3" papers, and so forth, teachers can confer with each student to review the paper along with the criteria. A student can then set some personal goals for writing improvement. These conferences present students with their writing in a context outside of grades. The holistic assessment is not a test, rather it generates specific information about student writing.

In sum, then, whether the project is done formally or informally, it begins with teachers talking to each other about why they want to score a writing sample holistically. Their reasons will determine what happens to the papers after scoring. For instance, some groups may want to set minimal competencies for student writing in their district; others may wish to share with other teachers a description of the development of writing skills across the grades. Still others may use holistic evaluation as a preface to conferences with each student about his or her progress in composition. Yet another group may go through the process to generate discussions on what makes good writing.

HOW IT CAN BE DONE

A *formal* evaluation of all the students in a grade level, at a school, or in a district involves several steps:

1. Choose a topic (for each grade level or pair of grades) and decide on prewriting activities. For guidelines, see the next section of this chapter.
2. Have those who will score the student papers write on the topic. This step should reveal bad topics or poor wording in questions.
3. Have all the students write. On the backs of their papers, students put symbols or assigned numbers rather than their names. Papers are anonymous until scoring is completed. All papers to be scored are then put in one stack and numbered consecutively.
4. Decide upon the range of possible scores: a 1 to 9 scale, a 1 to 5 scale, a 1 to 4 scale, or a 1 to 3 scale have all been used by different groups. (A discussion of these different scoring ranges follows after all the steps are listed.)

---

[2] Keep it a secret that Wordsworth was a terrible speller, or we may lose "We are Seven" from the senior high school anthology. And let it be unknown that Renaissance aristocrats valued creative spelling: Queen Elizabeth prided herself on spelling the word "their" four ways within a single sentence.

5. For scoring day, select, at random, a set of sample papers and make copies for each reader. Readers score the samples and compare scores. Where there is unanimity, readers have an anchor for discussions about samples which provoke disagreement.
   - Once readers agree on a few papers for each score, they can examine papers about which there is disagreement. Comparison to anchor papers may dispel discrepancies. In some cases it takes a group decision to value one central feature of a paper higher or lower than do some individuals on the team.
   - It is most important to note, however, that absolute unanimity on a paper is unnecessary: if the group uses a 4-point scale, scores one point apart do not require discussion. If the group uses a 9-point scale, scores two points apart need not be reconciled. However, papers receiving scores more than one or two points apart need a third reading.
   - A few papers may cause disagreements which no amount of discussion reconciles. These papers should be put aside for special attention later. (We have included four samples of such papers, pages 20-25.)
   - Upon completing these initial discussions of sample papers, readers can score another set of sample papers, if time allows. If scores are within one on a 4-point scale (or within 2 on a 9-point scale) the readers have established the reliability of the scoring procedure.
6. Two readers score each paper. Proceed in this way: half the papers receive a first reading. The reader puts a score and his or her initials on the back of these papers, shuffles them, and deals them out for a second reading. Readers put the score and their initials for the second reading on the front of the paper.
   - A scribe tallies all the scores and reports to readers the percentages of papers which receive identical scores or scores within one point of each other. If the group is using a 4-point scale, about 90% of the scores should be within one point of each other. All papers receiving scores two or more points apart are either read to the group for scoring or handed to a third reader. That reader's score decides the discrepancy. If necessary, readers can review their anchor set before reading the remaining half of the papers. They are scored in the same way.
7. Following scoring, probably on another day, teachers meet to generate descriptions of student writing. Between scoring day and discussion day, someone assembles in one stack all the papers which received two scores of 4. In another stack are papers which received two scores of 3, and so forth. Teachers collect a few papers for each score, read them, and begin to generate lists of characteristics. In columns headed "content," "organization," "style," "word choice," "mechanics," and whatever else teachers wish to describe, they can list attributes of the 4 papers, the 3 papers, and so on. (Again, you may want to look at Tables 1-4 on pages 29-32 for examples of others' lists of characteristics of elementary students' writing.)
   - In generating lists of descriptions, readers can look very closely at papers: what sorts of verbs appear in superior primary-grade papers, what sorts of adjectives? Do misspelled words show evidence of phonetic attempts? Is there variety of sentence length and syntax? When is characterization present in the better papers? Do other aspects of content stand out?
   - These discussions can lead to teachers setting standards for minimal competency, making curriculum decisions, or evaluating the school's composition program.
8. Tabulate results for individuals, or grade levels, or for the entire school. (A student's score could be the total points awarded by both readers.)

9. Give students their scored essays along with copies of the table of criteria. In conferences with their teachers, students go over the papers and the criteria. Students can set goals for their progress in composition.

The steps described above raise three simple questions: What are the relative merits of 3-point, 4-point, 6-point, and a 9-point scale; what do readers do about mechanics; and, what happens to papers that receive two scores which are far apart?

Choosing the scale

Each of the formal holistic assessment programs we know has a set of scoring tips to guide readers. These reveal the relative merits of different point systems. Readers can approach the 9-point scale in this way:

> Use scale of 1-9 but use even points primarily. First decision: is paper in upper half or lower half? Is paper a 2,4,6 or 8? Then refine scoring, using odd numbers to reward things which really stand out—language use, freshness, crispness—or to lower the score of a paper which was a struggle to read. [3]

Those who wish to use a writing sample to assess the student's comprehension of the question and the full response to it might try a 6-point scale which gives rise to these discriminations:

1. Shows no understanding of the question; incompetent in structure, usage, and idiom.
2. Drifts away from assigned topic; has serious faults in writing.
3. Misinterprets the question or is superficial; contains serious deficiencies in writing.
4. Generally well written.
5. Clearly demonstrates competence.
6. Interprets question intelligently and coherently yet may have slight flaws in writing. [4]

A 4-point scale allows readers this rough guide:

1. Intensive help is needed;
2. Below grade-level competency;
3. Grade-level competency;
4. High competency. [5]

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[3] Kate Blickhahn, "Writing Project Scoring Instructions," C.A.T.E. Asilomar Conference, Fall, 1973. (Copy available from BAWP Office, School of Education, University of California, Berkeley, California 94720.)

[4] These are paraphrases of guidelines set forth in Edward M. White, "Materials from the California State University and Colleges 1975 English Equivalency Examination."

[5] "Writing Sample Report," Jefferson County, Colorado, 1976, p.4.

Other teachers have used a three-point scale which promotes quick scoring:

1. Weak
2. Typical
3. Superior

Because these teachers wanted to describe appropriate expectations for students' writing, rather than to assess each student's ability, they found it sufficient to generate samples in only three categories. Papers which were not easily placed in one of the three categories were simply put aside, and those which clearly fit one of the three categories gave these teachers ample information for describing the development of writing skills from third grade through high school.

Attending to mechanics

Mechanics receive attention in various ways in programs that use holistic assessment. Here are sample instructions:

> Generally ignore mechanics. Add a point for exceptionally sophisticated style and grace; subtract a point for severe mechanical and stylistic deficiencies that block communication of meaning. 6

Cal State Instructions to readers include this: "Spelling errors should not ordinarily be counted against the score." However, at Jefferson County, three of the nine categories which guide a reader's scoring are "Handwriting," "Spelling," and "Mechanical Conventions." (See Tables 1-3.)

My recommendation is to ignore mechanics in holistic scoring but include them in the discussions which follow the scoring. Mechanics should receive attention in the rewriting of compositions, in student-teacher conferences, and in peer editorial groups. However, seeing beyond misspellings and missed commas to the style, content, and organization of a paper, to its thought and its personality, is more appropriate work for teachers, particularly during a holistic assessment. My college Shakespeare professor, Theodore Baird, told us of alumni stopping him to remark on the poor spelling of college graduates nowadays. Baird would tell them, "Yes, that's what I want on my tombstone. 'He taught them to spell.' " Let holistic assessment remind us what it is we want students to master.

Papers receiving disparate scores

As I already noted, a third reader receives any paper whose two scores are far apart. That reader's score stands by itself. For instance, if a paper receives a "4" and a "2" (on a 4-point scale), it gets a third reading. The score of the third reader becomes its official mark.

However, these papers may also make an interesting set which deserves its own consideration in discussions following scoring. Here are four papers which prompted divergent opinions and lively discussions about the characteristics of good writing. One is by a third grader, two are by 4th-5th graders, and one is by a junior high student.

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6 Blickhahn, "Writing Project Scoring Instructions."

The wand of magic

There was a girl, and she had a wand and she could do what no one else could do.
he was magic!

Her name was Maggy (that's her writing) and she wasn't very magic, all she had was a magnificent wand, very big and she could do what ever she want's.

One day, however, she lost it, and serched for it all over the place and could not find it.

She wanted a book so she could read it.

It was a hot day, so she wanted a fan too. Suddenly the earth began to shake. It was horrible.

So she looked even harder for her wand.

She knew that something would happen and she held on tight for sh

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was falling!
She didn't know where she was falling, so she was not scared.
Then she looked! She was over the biggest hole she had ever seen! She fell through and landed on a soft mattress.
She was interested in what happend. She had not had her wand with her, "then it would of explained it" she thought.
She would investigate. She walked around and there she found a pure white pebble. She picked it up and it turned and moved about, as if were worked by a machine. Then she remembered she had catechism and forgot the amazement she had before. She looked at the pebble once more, and then dropped it.
She wanted to get out, but she couldn't. So she screamed, but it didn't work. All she did was panic, she didn't think she'd ever get out. She looked around, and spotted a small thing, she

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didnt know what it was. She picked it up. It moved!
Maggy dropped it immediately. Suddenly she saw a step ladder.
and she would rather stay than go to catechism, so she
did it go up the ladder. She took the white pebble in her hand
once more. This time she prepared it for study. Then up the
stepladder and there sat the wand at the mouth of the hole.

Following the holistic dictate of reading quickly and trusting first impressions can lead readers of "The Wand of Magic" toward delight or toward confusion. The juxtapositions may appeal to some readers, while others demand clear transitions and connections. The writer has many strengths as well as a weakness in logic and coherence.

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Wellcam Back pall I mist You.

You got me werede I that you wod never com back. wear have you Ben the past week. You smell Bad. How bat a Bath then I WiLL reed You. then wee can get in Bed and go to Selp We have a Big day to moro. then I wook up and my Dog wesent ther then I went down Srers and tolb my mom and Dab thay Sed He we ll Be Bock So I went out side. then two weeks wint past thin I was walking down the street and I Sow my Dog. He was hit By a car. Then I took him hom and I Berde him in are Back yard.

The end

In this essay a 5th grader responds to a photograph of a boy hugging a dog. Poor penmanship, spelling, and grammar, along with some jumps in time, cause many readers to score this as a "1." Others respond to the immediacy of the piece, its voice, its dramatic quality. "Welcome back, Pal, I missed you!" has the ring of authenticity we want in all writing.[7]

[7] From "The Meaning of Error," unpublished inservice presentation by Miles Myers, 1977.

I Principal of Orange Blossom School.

If I was a principal of Orange School I'd have things ran in tip top condition. But first I would check into my school. then I would ask her it was a private school. And then I'd call a Kids meeting to ask her it was ok see I like to be picked by the kids. and this is what I'd say (fellow members of this school I called you here today, and go on with junk like that intill some one says go on with the speech that is when I yap back at them and say I WANT YOU ALL TO RESPET ME! hoping they herd me, P.E. is going to be free play and it is very long a hour long but that means NO RECESS! that would get them uber it cont's BUT ther is one good thing we eat at 10:30 and munch all day long. that's the way I want it ran.

Again, like "Welcome Back Pal," this essay marshalls those who value unity and neatness against those taken with the child's adeptness with voice and clever use of type face.

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Something Unusual

How do birds ~~are~~ know how to build thier nests? Maybe they have little computers inside of them that tell the birds how to build thier nests and where to build their nests in a certain tree. Maybe there is a little man who runs around at night to make nests in trees for birds who don't have them and replaces them every new year. Or maybe there is a band of storks that fly all over dropping nest in the trees of needie birds. Maybe the birds have a secret underground nest factories where they make nests and the birds pick them up every spring. If we have a milkman who delivers milk every morning, maybe they have nestmen who deliver nest every spring. Maybe they have little pellets that fit under thier feathers and they fly up into a tree and say a magic word and it turns into a nest. Maybe it is just instinct?

"How do birds know how to build their nests?" was a response to the topic, "Write about 'something unusual'." Detractors of the essay point out that it avoids the topic, it isn't truly about something unusual, although the essay itself is different. These readers also note the episodic, stitched-together quality of the writing: example follows example without elaboration and without constructing any argument or main point. The essay's appreciators applaud its humor. [8]

The final scoring of such papers may often follow the Golden Mean, but discussion of such essays, apart from their final score, can generate descriptions of the papers which don't fit. Such discussions remind us that as teachers we must learn to appreciate qualities we may never value as readers. Different writing deserves positive reception: as teachers we must encourage the strengths present in the four papers we have just reviewed. Also, discussing these papers helps us realize that good writing can be seriously flawed; helping these children become better writers may provide special challenges, challenges which the group can discuss.

Choosing the topic and determining prewriting activities

Below are descriptions of ways to choose the topic for a writing sample and to establish prewriting activities.

Teachers may follow the lead of the National Assessment of Educational Progress by having their third, fifth, seventh, and ninth graders write about evocative photographs. These instructions to third graders are beneath a picture of a boy hefting an elephant's upraised foot:

> Look carefully at the picture and decide what is happening. Make some plans for writing about the picture. You might want to think about what happened a few minutes ago as well as what will happen next. Are there people involved who are not in the picture? What is the child doing? How does the elephant feel? Your paper might be a story or description. Use your imagination and write about this picture. Give your story a title.[9]

Seventh graders got a different picture—a silhouette of two figures on a river raft at sundown—and briefer instructions:

> Look at the picture above. You can react to it in any way you wish by writing about it in one of the following ways: as a story, as a description, or as an opinion.[10]

At the very least, choose different topics for primary and upper grades. The topic "My Favorite Object" may work well with middle-grade students, but it fails to spark much from first graders. On the other hand, the allure of a magic wand begins to wear off in third grade.

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8 Jane Waxenberg and Barbara Sloane discovered "Nests" in their holistic assessment in the Piedmont (California) School District, 1977.

9 Jefferson County, 1976, p. 22. Also, as Appendix I, I include topics and sample student responses from the National Assessment of Education Progress' Writing Examination.

10 Jefferson County, 1976, p. 35.

Some teachers like to have adult readers write on the topic before the students do. This practice often exposes ambiguities in the topic or the instructions. Some test designers pilot questions in several classrooms before using them.

Others of us do little fancy preparation in choosing the topic: "Pretend you are principal of a new school, Orange Blossom School. What would you do?" or, "Write about your pet or about your favorite possession." Even such topics as these generate excellent samples for teachers to discuss.

Although some groups of teachers prefer no discussion prior to writing for holistic scoring, others realize that prewriting activities will improve all the compositions and give the children a chance to do their best. Teachers can easily standardize prewriting activities. If a primary grade topic were "If I had a pet dragon," participating teachers could agree to read a particular dragon story and let children discuss dragons, draw dragons, and brainstorm descriptions of them. Then the teachers could introduce the topic and begin the writing.[11] Because prewriting activities are important in every other writing situation, I recommend that they also preface the writing for holistic assessment.

WHO'S DONE IT

Teachers are under great pressure to teach the basics. It is, then, important to stress two aspects of holistic assessment: it is an excellent method for determining what is basic to good writing at any given grade level, and it is the assessment method used by those national testing organizations whose reports are cited frequently by school critics.

Both Educational Testing Service (which markets the College Entrance Examination Boards) and the National Assessment of Educational Progress use holistic assessment.[12] As senior researcher for E.T.S., Paul Dietrich provides direction to that program; his several books and articles are resources for teachers. (See bibliography.)

Another holistic assessment of thousands of students occurs annually in Jefferson County, Colorado (suburban Denver). The annual report from the county schools' office includes summaries of scores, sample papers, and the scoring criteria. This manual includes some of this material on pages 29-31.[13]

In California and the Bay Area several schools and districts conduct holistic assessment. The California State University system writing sample is the largest statewide holistic assessment. Professor Ed White, in the English Department at California State, San Bernadino, chairs the writing-sample committee.

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[11] Elizabeth Burch and Georgiena Campbell generated this excellent holistic topic in their kindergarten at Del Rey School in Orinda (California) in 1977.

[12] The address of ETS is Education Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey 08540. The address of National Assessment is 1860 Lincoln Street, Denver, Colorado 80203.

[13] The report is available through Mr. Cary Stitt, Language Arts Specialist, Jefferson Co. Schools Office, Quail Road, Lakewood, Colorado 80215.

Drake High School's English Department has done holistic assessment annually for almost ten years. 14 Kate Blickhahn from Drake can provide materials on its assessment as can Cap Lavin of the Writing Project at the University of California, Berkeley, School of Education.

Elementary and junior high teachers in San Mateo, Modesto, Piedmont and San José are a few groups who have recently conducted holistic assessments with and without the assistance of Bay Area Writing Project teacher/consultants. Jean Jensen, Ken Williams, Rita Roberts, Keith Caldwell, Barbara Sloane, June Waxenberg and others--all accessible to school districts through the Writing Project office--provide assistance to teachers who want to conduct holistic assessments. 15

In the next chapter are samples of children's writing and a list both of the characteristics which consistently seem to separate the best papers from the others. As in the discussion of holistic assessment, I emphasize the need for teachers to look to the actual writing of children when deciding which skills to teach at a given time.

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14 The address of Drake High School is 1327 Drake Blvd., San Anselmo, California 94960.

15 Bay Area Writing Project teacher/consultants, through support from the University of California, the Carnegie Foundation, and local districts, participate with teachers in inservice workshops on composition. Setting up holistic assessments is one frequent outcome of these workshops.

Jefferson Co., Colorado
Writing Sample Report, 1976

3rd GRADE CRITERIA 1975-1976

	IDEAS	STYLE AND VOCABULARY	HANDWRITING	SPELLING	MECHANICAL CONVENTIONS	GRAMMAR AND USAGE	SENTENCE STRUCTURE	ORGANIZATIONAL & PAR. DEV.
1	lacks coherency rambling not well developing	limited vocabulary general lack of adjectives	generally not neat inconsistencies in size, formation, spacing and alignment	misspells common words omits vowels lacks symbol/sound correspondence	misuse of capitals lack capitalization for proper nouns capitals appear in middle of words and sentences lack of punctuation	incorrect tense shift tense within composition misuse of "a" for "an"	generally poor sentence structure sentence fragments run-on sentences	lack of paragraphing lacks sequence lacks development of idea – have beginnings but no middle or end no indentation of paragraphs
2	literal translation of topic lack spark nothing seems to happen	generally lack attempt to go beyond common words adjectives are not often used	generally neat	misspells common words Phonetic approach to spelling most words	capitals are used at beginning of sentences inconsistent use of capitalization and end marks IF APPLICABLE attempts to use conversation with no quotation marks	misuse of "a" for "an" subject-verb agreement is evident	some awareness of sentence structure sentence fragments run-on sentences sentence patterns are not varied	lack of paragraphing generally indent first paragraph lacks progression of ideas
3	imaginative ideas begin to emerge main idea is carried through	attempt to use expanded vocabulary some use of adjectives stronger verb selection	generally neat	occasionally misspells common words attempt to spell difficult words is phonetic	first word of sentence capitalized capitals sometimes appear in middle of sentences end marks used correctly possessives are generally punctuated correctly	satisfactory subject - verb agreement occasional misuse of "a" for "an"	some variety in sentence patterns most sentences are declarative some evidence of sentence fragments or run-ons	lack of paragraphing generally indent first paragraph conclusions are apparent good beginning sentence generally good sequence
4	well developed cohesive ideas creative spark consistent point of view	use of descriptive words use of transitional words and phrases helps flow of writing	generally very neat	correct spelling of common words successful attempts at spelling difficult words correct spelling of homonyms	uses a variety of mechanics well IF APPLICABLE attempts at conversation use quotation marks but often lack other elements (i.e., commas, capitals, paragraph indentation)	possessives are used correctly tense is consistent subject-verb agreement is good	varied sentence patterns few sentence fragments and run-ons	lack of paragraphing first paragraph is indented well developed beginning, middle and end good sequence

TABLE I

Jefferson Co., Colorado — 5th Grade Criteria – 1975 - 1976

	STYLE	IDEAS	ORGANIZATION	MECHANICS	STRUCTURE	SPELLING AND VOCABULARY	HANDWRITING
1	sentences start with same word (and, because, and then, so) word/phrase repetition without sentence point of view changes as composition progresses	literal translation of topic main idea is lacking	lack of sequence and purpose	capitals & end marks missing generally lack use of other mechanics (i.e., paragraph indentation, commas, apostrophes, quotation marks, etc.)	many run-on sentences many incomplete sentences many choppy sentences lack of paragraphing	frequent spelling errors in commonly used words (they, about, to, watch, etc.) no descriptive words much repetition of limited vocabulary	inconsistent slant poor letter formation confusion of upper and lower case letters not fluent spacing poor
2	point of view often inconsistent composition moves slowly	ideas may go beyond literal translation of topic some attempt to develop a main idea contain unrelated ideas	overall plan is lacking or illogical IF APPLICABLE failure to create plot and set scene	attempt to use basic mechanical conventions with some success	frequent use of run-ons and sentence fragments lacks varied sentence structure some awareness of paragraphing	numerous spelling errors attempt to use descriptive and vivid words	generally neat and legible with some inconsistency
3	point of view is generally consistent sequential movement is generally evident	main ideas are usually developed and carried throughout composition imaginative and unusual ideas begin to emerge	evident plan but not fully developed attempt to develop strong beginnings and endings	generally successful use of basic mechanical conventions IF APPLICABLE Inconsistent dialogue and punctuation	complete sentences with few exceptions some variety in sentence patterns Paragraphing is evident	most basic words spelled correctly some success with spelling uncommon words increased use of vivid and descriptive words	neat and legible
4	spirited and polished consistent point of view personal involvement of writer is evident figurative language is used	ideas are unusual and imaginative composition is developed around central idea	definite plan or sequence is evident strong beginnings and endings are apparent	good knowledge and application of mechanical conventions	sentence patterns are varied knowledge of paragraph structure is demonstrated	variety of word choice spelling is accurate with few exceptions	neat and legible

TABLE 2

Jefferson Co., Colorado — 7th Grade Critiera

	STYLE & IDEAS	MECHANICAL CONVENTIONS	SPELLING	HANDWRITING	GRAMMAR & USAGE	SENTENCE STRUCTURE	PARAGRAPH DEVELOPMENT
1	no idea or idea isn't developed limited vocabulary lack of specificity vagueness - not clear skips around - lack of unity literal	erratic capitalization dialogue is not correctly punctuated end marks are often omitted misuse of commas	irregular spellings of same, simple words misspells common words confuses simple homonyms and contractions confuses plurals and possessives	erratic and lacks control	subject-verb agreement errors shifts verb tenses erratically within same sentences and paragraphs misuse of pronouns misuse of modifiers	fragments and run-ons words omitted unusual or confusing word order uses simple sentences	no topic sentence few supporting sentences weak beginning sentences no clinchers
2	ideas ramble - loosely connected - illogical - immature simplified, basic voc. dialogue often isn't relevant to story gaps in unity usually literal few modifiers	capitalization is less erratic dialogue is inconsistently punctuated end marks are erratic misuse of commas	letters are left off misspells common words less frequently confuses simple homonyms and contractions confuses plurals and possessives	legible but careless	subject-verb agreement errors shifts verb tense misuse of pronouns misuse of modifiers	some fragments and run-ons little sentence variety words omitted confusing word order occasionally	attempts to paragraph but not always successfully may have topic but doesn't support it transitions are seldom used
3	imaginative and logical ideas uses specific vocabulary to create images progresses from beginning to middle to end dialogue usually relevant to story figurative language	capitalization is usually correct dialogue generally punctuated correctly effective use of end marks commas usually used correctly	some misspelled words occasional misuse of homonyms, plurals, possessives and contractions	overall appearance is good	subject-verb agreement usually good few verb tense shifts occasional pronoun and modifier misuse	basically good sentence structure attempts sentence variety	paragraphs generally change for appropriate reasons frequently uses topic sentence, good beginning, supporting sentences and clinchers transitions used more effectively
4	creative & original idea fully developed selective, precise word choices fully developed beginning, middle, end dialogue has substance figurative language	mastery of mechanical conventions	few misspelled words - usually limited to more difficult words	neat and legible	excellent control of grammar and usage	good sentence structure uses sentence variety	good development of paragraphs transitions used effectively

TABLE 3

Santa Clara County Countywide English Committee

	GRADES 2, 3, 4	GRADES 5 & 6	GRADES 7 & 8
Superior	CONTENT Feelings attributed to self or others Writer is aware of degrees, shades, ideas, is tentative Recognizes motivation or intent ORGANIZATION Unity and cohesiveness STYLE Controlled sentences, longer than average Sentences varied in length and syntax Uses descriptive words Uses analogies or other figurative language Uses complete sentences Includes conversation MECHANICS Capitalizes and punctuates correctly Uses informal contractions Spells well and uses past tense consistently	CONTENT Understands subject Perceptions are direct and accurate details relevant Details support ideas Renders feelings well ORGANIZATION Sustained purpose Logical order Has introduction and conclusion Constantly aware of theme STYLE Uses personal voice Variety in sentence length and syntax Rich vocabulary Standard usage MECHANICS Minimal errors; neat manuscript, indent paragraphs	CONTENT Original in interpretation and viewpoint Sensitive to the reader or "audience" ORGANIZATION Consistency of voice, tense and person Consistency in point of view Well-developed sentence structure: thesis statement, support, and conclusions are present but not formulaic STYLE Vivid, accurate, and specific in direction Varied sentence structure MECHANICS Spelling and punctuation errors minimal Capitalization almost perfect
Typical	CONTENT Unremarkable content Uninspired ideas Some attribution of feelings Some redundancy Lack of originality ORGANIZATION Sentences tend to be isolated bits around a theme STYLE Brief, unelaborated sentences: subjects and predicates Sentences begin with pronouns or "And" Many run-ons Some variation in sentence length and syntax Few, if any, transition words MECHANICS Spelling, capitalization, punctuation uncontrolled	CONTENT Overall inconsistency in skills Unsophisticated Tends toward factual Information not always pertinent Feelings mentioned adequately ORGANIZATION Some relation between ideas Lacks consistency Uncertain in paragraph development Good and weak elements side by side STYLE Matter of fact Little variation in sentence pattern Ordinary vocabulary; little vivid imagery Some personal expression, no descriptive verbs MECHANICS Some errors in spelling, punctuation	CONTENT Meets requirements of task General rather than specific Infrequent originality STYLE Limited in sentence variety and length Overuse of pronouns and linking verbs Dull; lack conviction and emotional tone
Weak	CONTENT Has meaning but lacks ideas and feelings which interest reader Some vivid supporting detail No writer's feelings; no judgments ORGANIZATION No sense of audience; of a reader's needs No direction; random writing STYLE Sentences are all simple Many fragments Frequent use of "and" MECHANICS Editing errors are frequent	CONTENT Often misses point; overly simple Serious omissions Literal; few feelings expressed ORGANIZATION No central purpose No clear direction; skips around Weak conclusion STYLE No exact verbs Dull choice of words Awkward sentences MECHANICS Many errors in spelling, punctuation, agreement and tense consistency Difficulty paragraphing; run-ons and fragments Manuscript unattractive; inconsistent slant	CONTENT Language itself seems to be a stubborn barrier to expression; most are also inarticulate in oral language Neither thought nor feeling flow easily ORGANIZATION Organization reflects neither purpose nor audience STYLE Style is non-existent MECHANICS Punctuation, spelling, handwriting are poor

TABLE 4

2. WRITING ABILITY, K-8

In order to talk about teaching writing, one should first look at samples of children's writing. This chapter begins with a look at children's writing in general, and then examines seven papers written by third graders—superior, typical, and weak pieces. Next, the chapter briefly discusses teaching approaches: based on the samples, which teaching goals seem appropriate for third grade? The bulk of Chapter 2 provides samples of student writing year by year from kindergarten through eighth grade, and lists the skills whose presence seems critical to the success of the best papers and whose absence seems critical to the failure of the worst. The chapter concludes with a summary of some of the curriculum decisions teachers can base upon a close look at student writing.

A LOOK AT CHILDREN'S WRITING

Teachers in more and more districts across the country are developing or adopting sequences of instruction:

2nd grade: teach the period and comma; teach simple sentences

3rd grade: teach quotation marks; teach compound sentence, etc.

In this chapter I argue that such sequences of instruction are not written on tablets handed from the Lord to Moses. Teachers must write them after taking a close look at student writing—and rewrite them as observations sharpen, as teaching improves, and as students change.

The worst sequence for composition instruction would be one developed by people closeted apart from children, arbitrarily deciding the grade level when teachers should teach antonyms, exclamation marks, short stories, and relative clauses.

While this chapter excludes a formal continuum for composition instruction, it does include some of the materials teachers need to write such a sequence. By looking carefully at the continuous development of writing abilities from kindergarten through eighth grade, we have the vantage from which good curriculum decisions are possible.

Let's begin with some comparisons of writing by students of different ages. The first insight is that good pieces of writing, no matter what the ages of the writers, have several characteristics in common. The second insight is that the good writing of young children is different in important ways from the good writing of older children. Here, for instance, are a 6-year old's writing and a 14-year old's.

Our Jane

Our Jane is two
She plays with a boy and
She has white hair and
she has blue eyes and
she has a runny nose and
she can't talk and
she eats biscuits and
she's fat and
she pinched my biscuits and
she's got a bike like an old cronk and
she plays with my train and
she's a monkey when telly's on.
She plays about.
She plays up and down.
They let her.[1]

[1] A. B. Clegg, ed., *The Excitement of Writing* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1965).

B . . . geriatric hospital is pretty much the same as any other hospital. As soon as I walked in I could smell the cleanliness which literally made me feel ill and depressed.

I would really hate to be put in a place like that, don't get me wrong, the staff are pleasant enough so is the building but the atmosphere is dead! The only entertainment they get is T.V. and each other. None of the patients talk to each other much. Most of the people I talked to said the food was good, the staff were fine but they wanted to go home.

It is enough to kill anyone being put in a place like that! It is really dull and quiet, nothing seems to happen. The old folks spend all day every day, sitting and looking at one another. Some are out of their minds. One woman lay in bed screaming, she sounded exactly like a monkey in a zoo. It was enough to give me the creeps anyway. Most people had relatives who visited them regularly. If I was the daughter of one of the women there I would certainly hate leaving my mother in a depressed place for even a day. I know that it is difficult to cope with old people and lift them around when you have got families of your own to deal with but I'd rather my parents died at home together or at least in familiar personal surroundings not a place where I would feel I was sent to die anyway.

I would feel that instead of waiting I would want to finish my life quick, die young. Anything to avoid being put in any sort of care.

I walked around like a cheshire cat, a grin or smile permanently fixed on my face, most people must have thought I was mad. I just laughed about any stupid thing. It seems ridiculous to me now, but that is how I felt. I could not help it. I have always had a secret dread for hospitals and would not be too keen on going back to B . . . again![2]

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2 James Britton, et. al, *Keeping Options Open* (*Writing in the Humanities*) (London Schools Council Project, 1974), pp. 6-7.

Both are excellent pieces of writing, either would delight a teacher. Both are coherent with a keen sense of form, and both have a strong personal voice. If we were to chart the characteristics of good writing, from first through eighth grade, we could begin here:

	1st	8th
superior	strong sense of form individual voice coherent, unified	strong sense of form individual voice coherent, unified

Yet there are differences between the two pieces. The hospital reflection is a great deal longer, the syntax and sentence length are varied, the setting is wider than school and family, and the writing moves from detail to reflection while "Our Jane" moves from detail to an abrupt evocative end. Now our chart can begin to discriminate between ages:

	1st	8th
superior	homely subjects extensive use of one syntactic unit details are ends in themselves	public topics or settings syntactic variety details lead to reflections, generalizations

At this juncture we could proceed to discriminate among ages by looking at additional pieces of writing from first through eighth grade, or, we could begin to discriminate within age groups: here, for instance, is another first grader's writing:

I went to The race and
I saw The funy cars
And the dragstrs went
fast. The cars are fun to
race in and we had
fun and we ate sanwiches[3]

This report shares some of the qualities of "Our Jane". Both rely on "and" for syntactic control, both are autobiographical and factual. Both record impressions without chronology or another form of transition controlling the sequence. So we could hypothesize that these are qualities shared by typical (competent) and superior first-grade writings.

But there are surely differences, too: "The race" lacks the strong beginning, middle, and end of "Our Jane"—the strong sense of form. And while "Our Jane" sustains one point of view,

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[3] This sample is furnished by Violet Tallmon of Modesto County Schools.

"The race" shifts from "I" to the drivers to "we." "Our Jane" reads smoothly while "The race" bobs and weaves like a funny car.

Yet, "The race" has virtues: it's competent, we know where we are. It may bump, but it goes. It has the hint of form: "I went" is a beginning, and "we ate sanwiches" puts a homely end to it. And, finally, while the piece is not very interesting to us, it is interesting to the writer: he had fun at the races, and he seems to enjoy recounting the fun.

Now we can add to our chart a description of competent writing which is not superior.

1st

competent
- comprehensible throughout
- subject has value to the writer
- nascent sense of form
- frequent use of "and"
- one general subject
- point of view shifts

We can also compare the vocabulary, syntax, and mechanics of "Our Jane" and "The race." Neither includes action verbs or many adjectives, the sentences are all simple except "She's a monkey when telly's on." "The race" mixes tenses and contains minor punctuation, capitalization, and spelling errors. Our chart could expand with these entries.

And so the charting proceeds. A group of teachers can look at other superior pieces of first grade writing—judged superior in a holistic assessment as described in the first chapter. The teachers can add other attributes and descriptors to the growing list and alter the original entries in light of new samples. The process continues with the examination of competent and then weak first-grade writing and so on through the elementary grades.

Rather than proceed at this point with charting, let us look at several third grade papers and then discuss teaching approaches which seem appropriate for children who would write in these ways.

THIRD GRADE WRITING AND TEACHING APPROACHES

Here are several papers third graders wrote when shown a magic wand and asked to write a story about it.[4]

The first two are superior--as judged by holistic assessment.

a. The Little Boy
b. My Magic Wand

These three represent competent third-grade writing.

c. the Magic Wand is
d. "There is a magic wand..."
e. The Magic Wand

These two are weak:

f. If I had
g. The Magic Wand

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[4]I thank Eleanor Bruce, Mary Ann Cowpersthwaite, and their third graders at Ross School, Marin County (California) for providing these stories.

The Little Boy

Once a little boy went walking. He went way up in the woods by a waterfall and there he tripped and fell sound asleep.

In bright sunshine he woke up. He saw four knights coming toward him. He started to run. He looked back and they were gone. Then he saw a castle in front of him. He went inside of it. He looked down and sumthing was there - it was like a stick. He picked it up and he put it in his pocket. He saw a dragon, it started to spit fire at him. And then the dragon said giv me that wand then he ran away he met a wizard and he said you can have five wishes d want one wish and and that wish was to go home. → END

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MY Magic WanD

Once in the dark moon light as I was quietly laying in bed and everything was quiet a fairy flew in the window and said "here take this wand And use it wisely you may only use it ten times" I was speechless So I said "thank you" The next morning was the first time I used the wand I was about 10:30 when My Sister started fighting over the yellow Clover duckie. So I tapped her on the head with the magic wand and she said "here" Now I had three more times to use it. The next time I used it was in the middle of the night I got very hungary so I went down stairs and got a plate and tapped the plate and there on the plate were a box of Chocolates. Now I only had eight more times left. I did not know What to do with them so I just tapped my hand and wished for Ten dollers And what do you think I saw Ten dollers So I went to the Candy store and I did that 8 times and that was the End of the magic wand.

THE End

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The Magic Wand is

the Magic Wand is Slikey.
The Magic Wand is pinkey.
It is silver with golden dust.
It has magic that you can trust.
But, I wish I Three wishes I'd make the wishes.
My wishes are I wish 5 watermelons to shar.
I wish I won a Lucky copon.
I wish I had more wishes for lader on.

Bup-Ba-BDaDa-thats all!

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d. 40

△ 86m

Like a Magic Wand in my bedroom it will do anything I want it to. It will make a person that I don't like turn into a frog or it could be a good deed. I like my Magic Wand because it can do a lot of things no person can do. I like it and use it. The Magic Wand is Wonderful to me and others. The end

the Magic Waond

Hey whats that? waw its a Magic Waond!
Hey the Magic wands talking! you may
have 3 wishes. I want a litte gold
sqwurl monkey, a cage full of monky things, and ten
bags of monkey chow! that will cost
5 thusun Dollors, cheep Scape.

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If I had a magic wand I would
turn my self into a beautiful Queen.
or the prettyest princess in the world.
I'd have a castle of my own. full of

The End

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The magic wand could turn Ted in to a Bed Todd in to a tod. Garret in to a parrot
Mike in to a bike thats what I like but it has to rhyme.

The End

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In the context of these pieces of actual student writing, let us also look at three approaches to third-grade writing. The first is a set of descriptors written by teachers;[5] the second is from an article by Lester Golub;[6] the third is from "The Continuum of Writing Instruction, K-8," from a local school district: it represents the district's writing curriculum for third grade.

A	B		C
Story becomes important	Coordination/ subordination used	Grammar	Abbreviations
Transitional words occur	Teach writing as encoding		Phrases
Lots of conversation	Values show through		Formal indentification of parts of speech
Vocabulary in stories increases (sounds and words)			Subjects and predicates
First and third person used		Spelling	Spell two-syllable words
Punctuation trouble			Digraphs
			Prefixes
			Homonyms
			Simple abbreviations
			Apply phonics and structural analysis
			spell word lists
		Dictionary	Guide words
			Pronunciation guide
			Plurals
		Handwriting	Cursive
		Mechanics	Abbreviations and numbers
			Capitalization of titles
			Indent Paragraphs
			Comma
		Products	Record Science experiments, etc.
			News articles for class or school paper
			Friendly letters
			Paragraphs
			Word pictures
			Organizational mapping

5 Teachers at Ross School generated this set of descriptors with the assistance of Cap Lavin of Drake High School, San Anselmo (California).

6 Lester Golub, "Stimulating and Receiving Children's Writing: Implications for an Elementary Writing Curriculum" in *Children and Writing in the Elementary School: Theories and Techniques*, ed. Richard L. Larson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 78-87.

First, compare the three sets. All three concur that the message, the information, becomes important to children in third grade.

The A list and the B list share another observation: "transitional words" and "coordination/ subordination" look at the same writing process from two vantages. A notices the child's lexicon, B notices the child's syntax. However C, for all its detail, lacks anything comparable.

Finally, A list and B list include descriptions of what goes on in the writing of these children: "punctuation trouble," "lots of conversation," and "values show through" are three examples. However, the C list consists mainly of mechanics. The A and B lists emphasize what is found in children's writing, whereas the C list relies on the index of a grammar book.

Let's return to the several samples of third grade writing to see if the three lists are accurate. The message, the information, and the story are indeed important to some of these samples, yet two of them—"The magic wand is slikey" (c) and "Ted into a bed" (g) — are more interested in word play. The A list notes some of that interest in the entry "vocabulary increases (sounds and words)." Sound is important in "Cheep scape"; "Bup-Ba-BdaDa-that's all" is the bee's knees. Teachers would certainly want to encourage this interest by giving third-graders opportunities to hear poetry, to sing and to compose lyrics, and to play with words.

Are there frequent uses of transition words and of subordination in these samples? The author of "My Magic Wand" uses "so" and "now" frequently; the "and" 's usually connect appropriately; "as" appears once. In "The Little Boy" (a), there is little besides "and" and "then." A dash is used once to great effect. Little subordination here. "But," "that," and "because" figure once in the other papers. From the looks of these papers, simple sentences are the rule—third graders might be encouraged to try "if...then," "as," "while," "when," and "because" phrases. However, for some students, extending their control over simple sentences seems the appropriate teaching goal.

Yes, there is some punctuation trouble, but at least punctuation is present in all the papers. There is also conversation in several of the samples. And, values appear in some of the samples: beauty in "If I had" (f), a bit of mistrust in the monkey story (e), friendship in "There is a magic wand" (d), favorite things in "Slikey...pinkey" (c), and candy, money and domestic tranquility in "My magic wand" (b). Teachers can discover a great deal about children's feelings and values by reading with some care. Noting these values may give clues for topics for post-writing conferences with students.

What to say of the C list? Might not a reader say "It's all well and good to notice the "Bup-Ba's," but what shall I teach? The C list tells me that at least." My answer is that the C list doesn't tell us much about *writing*. The two papers classified as weak communicate something, offer something for teachers to receive and build on. Yet, weak as they are, they will never approach the quality of the two superior papers even if the children master every splinter in C's scrap box. The writers of the weak papers greatly need other skills besides spelling, grammar, mechanics, dictionary skills, and better penmanship. A K-8 checklist for teaching mechanics may give some coherence to one part of the curriculum, but to call it a *writing* continuum is to call the fuzz a peach.

Even after studying these three approaches, a question remains: what is the distinction between excellent and poor third grade writing? The answer to that question provides the

foundation of a third grade writing curriculum. Holistic assessment is the best way to find that answer, of course, but here is a brief answer. To C's list of technical skills and the other two lists of general attributes, add a few skills critical for good writing and not shared by the poor writing. The use of descriptive words including descriptive verbs, the control of sequence, and consistency with verb tense and verb agreement are three practices common to good third grade writers and uncommon to poor ones. Therefore, attention to description, to time and sequence, and to number could be part of a third grade teacher's science, math and language arts activities. Such attention will reap benefits in the children's writing.

Children using materials which emphasize predication (See Chapter 6)

WRITING, K THROUGH 8

The "Important Attributes" lists which follow are my attempt to summarize the qualities of writing generally shared by students at a particular grade level—whether their writing is superior, competent, or weak. The "Critical Skills" lists are my attempt to note qualities of writing which tend to separate the best papers from the others. For example, in third grade, lots of children include dialogue in their stories, whether they know about quotation marks or not, but usually only the better papers include many descriptive words. The use of descriptive words is, then, a "critical skill" for third grade children. These lists are partly a synthesis of reports on student writing done as part of the Bay Area Writing Project and other school district curriculum programs.*

* For additional examples of teachers' close analysis of children's writing, see Tables 1-2-3-4, Pages 29-32.

Grade Level

Writing Samples

Preschool/Kindergarten
Dictated
Personal or fabulous
Short, usually tossed off

The old train man didn't have much coal left. The coal man came so the engineer could get his train back to the big town. The rattlesnake got killed. The trains crashed and the men got dead.

Preschool (age 4)

First Grade

Important Attributes:
Complete stories
One character stories
Personal to imaginative
Three sentences is average
Good kernel sentence form

Critical Skills:

Sense of form
Consistent point of view

At my house we have a golden scissors it was fake gold but one day I was playing that I was a fairy and I wave a spoon and it turned it in real gold. The scissors will cut anything I want. Then one day Jimmy was playing magician, and he got a spoon and waved it and the scissors turned magic and that scissor cut down Mrs. Quick's tree and that's why there is no gold scissors any more. [7]

First Grade

The train stopped and I got on and I went up in the mountains and I had fun with my brother and I had relatives too. I climbed the mountains and I fell and got hurt.

First Grade

Second Grade

Important Attributes:
Ten sentences, one full page
Two or more characters
More information than
first graders include
Egocentric, not always
logical (or sequenced)
Some adjectives and adverbs

Critical Skills:

Unity
Logic

The Dryer Killer

When you are young you put girls in the dryer. One time I put a girl in the dryer, and as far as I know she is still half dingy. Well you see, I was only three years old. We were playing and she was the clothes. I pushed the button and around she went. There was still money in the dryer. I ran upstairs and got my mom. She turned the dryer off. Boy did I get in trouble.

Second Grade

Princess Apple Blossom

Once upon a time there was a princess. Her name was Princess Apple Blossom. She knew Lady Pigeon Wing. She was a nice princess. Her mother was mean. Of course, she did not take after her. Her father was a nice king. He gave her rings and pretty dresses as golden as the sun. Her mother was so mad she wanted to kill her, so she put poison in a orange and she gave it to the girl. It did not hurt her. The queen was very mad. The princess told the king. The king told the princess to be quiet. So the princess put

[7] This sample and most of the following pieces are from Violet Tallmon, ed., *Anthology K-12* and *Anthology of Creative Expression*, Stanislaus County Department of Education.

poison in a apple, but the queen did not fall down dead. She went to the king. The king said to "stop this killing." So he called for the queen. He said he would call for his helper to put her in jail. So the queen said, "I hate you, I hate you." "Take her to jail," said the king. Many years later the queen died and the king and the princess lived happily ever after.

Second Grade

If I followed an ant it would climb up on my arm and whisper in my ear. This is what he would say "Why are you following me? I don't like it. Would you follow another ant?"

Second Grade

A witch gave a women a barley corn. She said Plant it and find out. The women planted the plant and it grew into a butterfly flower, and in the flower sat Thumbelina.

Second Grade

Third Grade

Important Attributes:
Values show through
Story line and message are important
Dialogue
Transition words and subordination/ coordination appear

Critical Skills:
Control over sequence
Descriptive words, including verbs
Consistent verb tense and verb agreement

Green Meadows

Waves blow from the ocean.
The birds fiddle their wings
up high
over green meadows.
And nightengales sing a tune.

Third Grade

One Day I Was Thinking

One day I was thinking of going to the moon but the moon is kind of dusty so I was thinking of being a dog. But a dog eats weird things. So I was thinking of being an author but an author writes books. I'd rather read them than write them. So I was thinking of being a bird, but birds fly and I get high sick. So I was thinking of being a termite, but I'd get too full of wood so I was thinking of being a grown-up. That's fun.

Third Grade

Baton Lessons

For Enrichment Week I had baton lessons. The leader was Mrs. Shively. The first day we learned how to do a figure eight. The second day we learned to twirl it in front. The third day we learned to twirl it behind our backs. The fourth day we learned to keep it twirling at one time and we had a contest to see who was the best twirler. I won with three other girls. We got an ice-cream.

Third Grade

Fourth Grade

Important Attributes:
Can imitate styles
Sequence of events is important
Voice and sense of audience appearing[8]
Tenses controlled
Prepositional phrases used well
Frequent use of dialogue
Adjectives and adverbs used well

Critical Skills:
Coherence
Feelings are attributed to characters

Grand Canyon

I think that Grand Canyon is a beautiful place. The Colorado River running swiftly through the mountains looks like a giant snake. As the clouds fly over the mountains it forms shadowy figures. The graceful golden eagle soaring through the air over the cliffy form of the rocks looks like an airplane. When the delicate snow flakes fall, it makes everything look like it's dressed in a wedding gown. When spring comes, the flowers are blooming beautifully. The leaves falling from the trees look like snowflakes falling to the ground. The whistling and whining of the wind makes spooky sounds through the night. When a storm comes, the lightning flashes and the thundering sounds like a lion roaring loudly. The rising of the sun tells the animals that it's time to get up and sunset tells them that it's time for bed...all except for the owl, he's awake at night and asleep in the day. The beauty of the animals and the canyon has a lot of wildlife and nature to it.

Fourth Grade

Fifth Grade

Important Attributes:
Complex events discussed yet full control lacking
Real story planning: beginning, middle, end
Humor (often silly but unsinkable)
Ability to paragraph emerging
Complex sentence structure emerges

Critical Skills:
Control of sequence and development of theme
Uniformity of verb tense
Varied sentence structure

My Life Story

It started way back when I was real little. I was really ugly too but I couldn't help it. My eyes were black and my hair was so purple that nobody wanted to look at me. My feet were green and my hands were blue. I went into the store and everybody started to laugh. I walked into the drug store and everybody started to yell, "Man from mars," "Man from mars!" This kept up until I left.

I ran away and built a rocket and flew to Mars, if people say I look like a Martian I am going to act like a Martian. I am going to marry an all green man. My kids will be purple, green, blue.

Fifth Grade

The Hole

Well, a long time ago, way back in them there hills lived a big ol' giant. He was a mean ol' critter, hated grown ups, hated young 'uns even worse.

And one day while that 'ol giant was eating whole sheep from a farmer's field, along came a young 'un

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8 A longer discussion of audience appears in Chapter 5 when we study James Britton. In brief, a writer's awareness of audience helps his or her selection of details and choice of tone.

not more than twelve, jumping down the road singing, "Jiminy Crickets Ain't it Cool" "Cool?", said the giant, sweat a dripping down his face. I feel like that there sun is a setting on my back. How come you are so cool? Well, there's this hole down the road with a rope down it, you climb down, stay there for a while, come out and you'll never be hot! Oh boy, let's go! So the little boy took him to the hole and when the giant went in he covered up the hole with a big rock. And the people paid him money for killing the giant, and the last time I seen him he was doing right well.

Fifth Grade

I walked home from school, and I heard the wind blowing hard. And the tin of a roof going BANG! BANG! Paper was flying all over the road and fields. Weeds bent low, and their fluttering seemed like they were burning

Fifth Grade

Sixth Grade

Important Attributes:
Sequence of *thought* clear
Imaginative writing
about the different
Often macabre and horrific
Social values tested
Metaphors present
Paragraph sense
Description present:
character and setting
Punctuation almost mastered

Critical Skills:
Unity: clarity of
theme and appropriateness
of detail
Sense of purpose
Ability to move away
from the literal to the
figurative and to feelings

I used to be scared of the dark, but now I ain't no more because I figure if they can't see ya they can't kill ya.

I used to believe that martians were a goin' to invade our planet, and I don't believe it no more because if they were a goin' to do it they would have done it by now.

I used to believe that the sky was falling every time the clouds moved fast but I don't no more because every time they did move fast the sky didn't fall.

I used to believe that the front of the cars were faces and I thought they was mean, so I went and got scared every time we was a goin' somewhere in the car. So I told my dad and mom about it and they said they wasn't really faces so I don't believe it no more.

Every time I used to eat steak I thought the bull would get mad and haunt me, but dad said they're dead and they can't hurt ya or haunt ya.

Sixth Grade

The Snake and the Mouse

Once long ago there was a snake named 'Big Bertha'. She was overweight and six feet long. Big Bertha was so lazy she would never look for her own food. She always expected someone else to. She was the best flatterer in town, and everyone else knew it, so they stayed away from Big Bertha. Except that is for

one little gray mouse. Her name was Evelyn. Evelyn was new in town. Everyone thought she was a snob.

Big Bertha's home was right next to Evelyn's. It was time for her nine o'clock snack. So Big Bertha was trying to con a lion into getting her nine o'clock snack. Eventually along came Evelyn. When the lion saw Evelyn he ran away. (The news about Evelyn has spread *fast.*) Big Bertha also saw Evelyn. Big Bertha thought she could get Evelyn to get her snack. But she thought Evelyn would do just as good! Big Bertha naturally had some plan up her sleeve. So she said "Help, you're new in town aren't you. My name is Big Bertha. What is your's?" Evelyn was very surprised to have anyone say anything to her. "Evelyn," she answered. Big Bertha said "I just love the color of your skin. I have a ***strange*** color on my nose. Why don't you look at it?" Big Bertha knew what color it was. Evelyn went and looked. When she was close enough, Big Bertha snapped her jaws shut and ate her. After she swallowed she let out a big burp. (For her mother had neglected to teach her good manners), she said "I wish all my meals were like that. She listens very good."

Moral: Be careful! Flatterers always get the best end of the deal!

Sixth Grade

Seventh Grade

Important Attributes:
Paragraphs have topic sentences
Action rises to a climax

Critical Skills:
Logical ability
Use of figurative language
Subject-verb agreement
Control of pronouns
Sentence variety

The Last

Dimly he could see the end of the alley from against the fence.

He was hot from running. He could hear them trying to find him. They would in a minute.

The night was dark, the sky overcast.

His stomach was tight, like he was going to get sick.

There was a lump in his throat. It was burning.

His hands began hurting. He realized his hands were curled into fists. His fingernail gouged holes in his palms.

His shirt was soaked with sweat.

He knew this was his last time.

Again, he attempted to climb the tall brick wall.

It was too tall.

He jumped and felt for the top. His fingers scraped the roughness.

Sweat and blood didn't mix, he found.

As he landed his legs gave. He collapsed on the pavement.

His thoughts were wild. The alley seemed to grow smaller, darker, cramped.

He lay there, his heart beating frantically.

The air grew hot and stuffy.

At the same time chills swept through him.

He wished this weren't real. He wished he'd never started this.

Why didn't they stop him and help him when he began to turn to this.

He'd been arrested four times.

Twice for possession of dangerous drugs.

Once for disruption of peace.

And once for rioting.

Now he was on probation.

He didn't care.

He was the big stuff now. This was his deal.

He was with the 'in' crowd.

He'd started out with cigarettes, then marijuana. Pills and mainliners followed.

If they found the tracks—

The sound of hard shoes against the sidewalk brought him to the future.

He stood and looked for a place to hide.

He heard whispers as he saw there was no hope for escape.

Cold sweat broke as his stomach went from heavy to light.

He wanted to fight.

He would, he decided, even if they did have a gun.

He heard them walking cautiously down the alley one on each side.

He quietly scrunched in the corner.

He heard a sound on the other side of the wall.

There were more of them.

The two in the alley were almost upon him.

He twisted his wrists with fear. The lump in his throat choked him.

He couldn't breathe as he jumped on one of them.

The other shouted.

He didn't notice two others climbing over the fence.

This one struggled.

He ran down the alley.

His legs were like jelly.

He dodged as a shot rang through the air.

It was just a warning.

He seemed to be running so slowly.

More of them appeared at the head of the alley.

He stopped.

He was tripped.

They started running toward him.

"No!" he cried.

He saw one who was close.

"No!" he cried as he hit with all his strength.

That one fell.

He hit another.

This one fell.

He knew he couldn't leave.

He saw a young one.

One who was on his first job.

He threw himself on him and cried for help.

This one put his arm around him and took him to a car.

He kept crying, knowing he'd lost for good.

They wouldn't let him go this time, not for what he had done.

He had killed a person.

Seventh Grade

It was a hot sultry day. What could one do but fish? The river is a little like a swamp. There are trees and decayed stumps with sickening bugs and squirmy things in it. Around the trees are plants that could

camouflage snakes perfectly. It seems that the fish would rather be caught than live there but one fish is struggling for his life, his mouth wide with terror, trying to get free from the hook. The terror is in his eyes, as his dark-green slimy body darts in and out of the water with great swiftness. He knows there isn't much he can do about the hook in his mouth, but maybe the line will get tangled and break and set him free, to live with the pain of the hook in his mouth.

Seventh Grade

Eighth Grade

Important Attributes:
Precise description valued
Critical Skills:
Lots of specific detail

She sat there all alone, longing to be loved. Her soft, silky gray fur ruffled as the breeze tossed it around. She had dull green eyes that glittered in the sun. When I held her she purred as if she would stay there forever. Then she sprang out of my arms and ran away.

Eighth Grade

Our family was on vacation, camping in the mountains. There were many trails great for motorcycle riding so that is what began our adventure.

The weather was gorgeous, cloudless, clear blue skys, the sun a big orange ball of fire warming the crisp moring air, excellent weather for taking off on a trip.

The motorcycle stood gleaming in the sun, a small, sleek Honda 90, yellowish gold in color with black leather seating for two.

My brother a 5'6" muscle man, got on the motorcycle, his broad back covered with a light T-shirt, his dark brown hair blowing in the gentle breeze, his dark blue eyes bright and alert as he revved the engine up. I mounted too, my long wavy hair tied back in a bright blue scarf, a powder blue wind-breaker covering my arm, zipped halfway up, my arms holding tightly on around his waist and my feet planted firmly on the pedals, as we took off.

We drove into the woods then began to fly over the dirt traces, narrow and bumpy, dust bellowing up

behind us, huge green trees, small shrubs, piles of dirt, rock and rubble passing by in a blur.

Suddenly the motorcycle swerved, rolling down a steep gravelly trail, (almost straight down), gathering speed, then hitting a bump, which threw me half a foot off the seat and landing we started to skid. I screamed, my heart throbbing...

—Page 1 of a remembrance by an eighth grader

IMPLICATIONS OF CLOSE READING

Surely there is a great deal one can gain even from such a small sampling. First, one can see the growth of composing powers that come with maturation—longer sentences, more complicated syntax, greater detail and more vivid language. A piece as wonderful and delightful as "Our Jane" is written by a different kind of mind than "The Last" and the piece on the geriatric hospital.

And second, to see the differences and to begin to list descriptors of children's writing may focus teachers on decisions they must make. If control of sequence seems to be a key skill separating excellent fifth grade writers from weak fifth grade writers, then the fifth grade curriculum should accent the chronological recording of science experiments, emphasize cause and effect in the study of history, and pause to discuss the logic of the plots of stories and the melodic line of music.

I hope this chapter has tantalized readers to find other samples of children's writing skills, and convinced teachers and language resource specialists that our expectations of children's writing should be based upon our close reading of their work.

"This is a forest and a deer is watching the sunset." – Age 4

TEACHING WRITING

II

3. PHILOSOPHY

Chapters three and four go hand in hand: Chapter three states a philosophy about composition, and Chapter four describes several paradigms for organizing writing activities—paradigms for carrying out the tenets of the philosophy. So this chapter is somewhat theoretical, general, and global, while Chapter four suggests practical solutions to the difficulties children have with writing; Chapter three serves in large part as an annotated table of contents to Chapter four.

A few of the philosophical statements include narrative elaboration: most statements refer readers to other sections of this manual for discussions which connect these statements to teaching.[1]

1. Each teacher of writing should articulate a philosophy about teaching composition.

   This chapter is, of course, mine. But other parts of this manual direct teachers toward a careful look at their values, their goals, and their teaching methods. Holistic assessment and subsequent discussions among teachers constitute one fruitful process for those who want to write out their philosophy about teaching composition.

   Included at the end of this chapter are two such statements of philosophy, one written by Tazu Takahashi, a sixth-grade teacher in San Mateo who uses writing extensively in her teaching of the humanities, and one by James Musante, a primary grade teacher in Moraga whose students always write across the curriculum.

2. Build writing activities around this paradigm: prewriting activities, writing activities, rewriting, and postwriting activities[2] (See Paradigm One, Prewrite—Write—Postwrite—Rewrite Cycle, pp. 63-66.)

   - Surround the act of writing with talk: exploration, planning, and evaluation.
   - The quality of the preparation for the act of writing is decisive in determining the quality of the result.
   - We write better by rewriting.
   - Postwriting activities include other things besides rewriting: sharing, appreciating, and valuing each other's work. Sharing can take many forms: performing stories as plays, binding stories together into a volume, taping stories. Postwriting activities can also include further investigation into a subject.
   - The teacher's response to a student's writing should be swift if not immediate.
   - Student-teacher conferences which focus on meaning produce improved writing. Conferences should occur regularly.

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[1] This section builds upon an article by James R. Gray and Miles Myers, "The State of Knowledge About Written Composition," 1975, included in a report to the Carnegie Corporation, pp. 61-62, and available from the Bay Area Writing Project, Department of Education, University of California at Berkeley.

[2] This tenet first came to my attention in unpublished inservice presentations: James Borrelli, Clayton Valley High School, Concord (California), "The Importance of Prewriting," 1976; and, Roy Alin, Blaine Junior High School, Seattle (Washington), "Who's the Audience?," 1976.

- The teacher's response must make sense to the student: comments such as "good organization" or "awkward" are probably of little help to students.
- Different intensities of grading do not significantly affect the quality of student writing.

3. Liberate writing from the confines of the "reading" and "language arts" periods: let writing span the curriculum. (See Paradigms Two and Three, Write Across the Curriculum, p. 68 and Utilize Themes, p. 73.)
   - Writing improves if all teachers become teachers of composition. When students write across the curriculum, teachers of all subjects need to respond to the student's clarity of expression.
4. In book contracts use writing to explore ideas and to speculate about feelings and motivation rather than to answer questions about narrative details. (See Paradigm Eight, Connect Reading to Writing, p. 94.)
5. Reading and the study of written prose have a positive effect on the quality of student writing. (See Paradigms Four and Five, Provide Structures, p. 75, and Write Imitations, p. 80.)
   - The study of how real writers write reveals patterns of syntactic additions and syntactic rhythms possible to imitate.
6. Sentence combining exercises, as an approach to composition, can increase sentence maturity. (See Paradigm Six, Teach Sentence Combining, p. 83.)
7. Let the Language Arts classroom (and all classrooms) be a lab for experimentation with language. (See Paradigm Seven, Display Writing, p. 91.)
   - If possible, design your classroom for interaction; have blackboard space, file space, racks for journals and other writing folders, moveable furniture, places which are quiet, places where conversation among small groups of students can proceed, a ditto machine, and bulletin board space outside the classroom where your class can leave messages for the rest of the school.[3]
8. The teaching of formal grammar (particularly when divorced from writing and taught as a substitute for writing) has a negligible or even harmful effect on the improvement of writing.[4] (See Paradigm Seven, p. 93.)
   - Mechanics and spelling are means to better writing not ends in themselves.
9. Ideas grow out of specifics. Teach students first to write about specifics, then teach them to write about abstractions as their ability to abstract increases.
   - The Record-Report-Generalize formula of composing works with very young children as well as with sixth graders. (See Paradigm Nine, Record—Report—Generalize, p. 98.)

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[3] From "Designing a Language Arts Classroom," an unpublished inservice presentation by Kent Gill, Emerson Junior High School, Davis (California), 1976.

[4] See, for instance, W.B. Ellen, et al., "The Role of Grammar in a Secondary School English Curriculum," *Research in the Teaching of English*, Spring, 1976.

- Record impressions of the experience informally in words and phrases.
- Report the experience to a specific audience in appropriate form and structure.
- Generalize on the experience, drawing conclusions and extracting meaning.

The concluding tenets of this philosophy are unconnected in any way to what follows in the next chapter. Rather, they are summary statements, parting words from a writer who wants to hold onto the lapels of his reader, fix his eye on the reader's and preach just a few more minutes.

He holds him with his glittering eye —
The Wedding Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.
—Coleridge

10. Mere writing does not teach writing: the act of writing alone and increasing the number of writing opportunities fail to bring significant improvement in writing skill.
    - I encourage all teachers to teach composition consciously, and I discourage those satisfied with students making regular journal entries or writing daily with no accompanying instruction, discussion, conferences, etc.
    - Less writing in conjunction with better teaching of writing will produce measurably superior results.
    - Mere "exciting topics"—marvelous subjects for composition—fail to improve writing significantly in and of themselves.
11. Because writing is analogous to performance, writers need a clear audience. The audience should include others besides the teacher; a few peers are a good potential audience as are trusted adults, best friends, and the general public.
    - Value writing, and honor students who excel, as athletes, beauty queens, spellers, and artists are honored.
12. **Evaluate students' writing abilities using their writing, not their answers to multiple-choice tests.**
    - Holistic assessment can assist students as well as teachers in their evaluation of writing progress.
    - Teacher-student conferences are central to ongoing assessment of student progress.
13. The design for a school's writing program should be shaped and altered by an assessment of samples of student writing. (See Chapter One.)
14. Teachers of writing must write.
    - Teachers should, at least occasionally, write assignments along with students.
    - Students should see their teachers writing. One teacher we know, for example, annually composes on the blackboard the longest sentence in the world.

If teachers do some writing themselves, they feel some of what their students feel—some of the blankness of an empty page—and they test both their philosophy about writing and

their methods of instruction. (As an example of a teacher's writing, I have included the beginning of a character sketch by Katy Farquarson, a teacher at Mills High School in Millbrae.)

Putting into words all the intangible feelings and knowledge a teacher of composition acts upon is rewarding and useful. A philosophy helps a teacher design and then measure the purpose of writing activities.

CHARACTER SKETCH
By Katy Farquarson
Mills High School, Millbrae

I'll never forget him, you see. The permanent thorn in my first-year-teacher's vulnerable dignity. The rowdy. The royal pain in the ass with his constant (what is the term they teach you in ed-psych?) "attention-getting devices" for destroying my tissue-thin lesson for the day. Joe A————s, discard from the parochial school, the ruler welts still impressed on his palms, the clamdigger's son from Sandy Hook.

Whether blatantly asleep during class or awakening with a loud yawn and belch, Joe constantly upstaged me during the first three months of our acquaintance. If the work was on literature, he would ask when I was going to start teaching real English. If it was on grammar, he patiently corrected me for the benefit of the class out of the vast fund of his parochial school grammatical background. During bouts of real boredom, he amused himself by playing mumblety-peg into the classroom floor, or wall, or desks, with his switchblade. Thunk. Thunk. Thunk. Lovely piece of machinery, it was. Chromeplated on the ends, polished ash handle, two blades. I used to wish he'd cut off his hand with it and bleed to death, but he never did. I made the tactical mistake, the first time I encountered the knife, of rather hysterically sending him to deliver it personally to the assistant principal, who supposedly handled the discipline for the school. Mentally I chortled and rubbed my hands together. Let's see him get out of *that* one! He did. Next day he delivered a note to me in the assistant principal's unmistakeable shaky script. I had made a mistake. Joe assured him that it had been a bracelet I saw, not a knife. I retreated from that bit of support from the rear.

The duel continued until almost Christmas, Joe lunging and parrying my ripostes with the ease born of 10 years' relentless practice at foiling teachers. He stopped after school one winter afternoon to correct me on a grammatical mistake I had made during class that day. Didn't I know enough to use possessive case with a gerund? I parried by remonstrating with him about his classroom behavior. His insolent blue eyes smoldered as he perched himself on the edge of my desk and said, "Don't bother, lady. I'm not in school now. It's 4 o'clock." Gently, as though to a dim 7 year old. I grasped the edge of the chair, felt the blood rising up my back to my neck, prickling on across the top of my scalp. Blushing, choking, speechless, hands curled until the nails made bluish semicircles in my palms, I stared at him as he made a quiet exit into the darkened hallway. The iron taste of rage filled my mouth; my leg muscles tensed. One burst of held breath. O.K., you son of a bitch. It is now total war.

MY BELIEFS
by Tazu Takahashi
Abbott Middle School, San Mateo

1. *Writing is an integral part of the learning process in all subject areas.*

Writing in all areas of the curriculum is as important to students as writing in English because writing is a tool for clarifying and organizing new information. It does not matter that the student records his/her discoveries in narrative or descriptive form; it does matter that he writes down his reactions.

When students record new information or discoveries, they are able to give the teacher an accurate indication of what is happening to the new information in their minds. This kind of evaluation is possible only through the means of individual expressive writing. It follows then that the teacher can offer help that meets each student's needs.

Writing across the curriculum gives students experience with a variety of audiences. As students mature, they will be able to write appropriately for the audience they are addressing.

2. *Writing is a process of communication with oneself and others. In order to avoid misunderstanding, the writer must master many skills involved in the process of writing.*

Students will work at producing writing that is clearly understood by their audience. Discussions with peers and teachers should provide the writer with help and insight as to why communication did not take place. The rewriting(s) will indicate that the writer has understood the cause for misunderstanding.

Mechanical correctness should be expected in such a way that free flow of thought is not jeopardized. Keeping a student's profile on frequency of errors in 3-5 basic skills and dealing with only those until they are mastered might be a way to bring about actual improvement in those skills.

Students should be given opportunities to communicate the same message (a story, an idea, etc.) in several different written and oral forms. This will help sharpen their abilities to select pertinent information when converting from one literary form to another (a book to Readers Theatre, a story to a poem, a play to radio script, a poem to mime, etc.). It will heighten their awareness of the variety of ways in which language is used and offer experience in points of view.

Students should learn to value their own way of writing and write in a manner natural to them. To help them do this, they should be given many opportunities to read other children's writings as well as adult models. Students giving feedback to each other could eliminate a lot of pretentious writing. The teacher should establish her role as a friendly advisor. If she does not, the students may view her as the examiner and write in a stilted manner designed to please that role.

Teachers of English must help each other to understand how to view and rate children's writing. By regularly reading student works together, teachers should gain some confidence and consistency in the evaluation of children's writings.

As a teacher dealing with 11-12 year old students, my first overall responsibility in writing is shaping the attitude of my students. I would like my students to feel that writing is

necessary, often difficult, and always rewarding. To this end, I would try to provide exploratory experiences, encourage experimental attitudes, give ample opportunities for examining inner feelings, insure a supportive atmosphere in which to take risks, and protect the time to think and write.

WRITING IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

by James Musante
Los Perales School, Moraga

I vividly remember my career as a second grader. In fact, I'll never forget the day when I walked into my second grade classroom and discovered a picture titled "Blue Boy" hanging over the blackboard. Next to it was written the assignment: "Write three paragraphs about this picture."

Without any discussion or idea sharing, we were expected to begin writing. But writing what? And why? Who cared about the funny looking kid with a feather in his head? I certainly didn't. Besides this, I had no idea what the teacher meant by the word "PARAGRAPH." I had heard it mentioned a couple of times, but I had no concept of what was meant by it. I was confused and too terrified to admit my ignorance.

The finished product of my efforts (as well as those of my classmates) ended up in a pile tucked somewhere on the teacher's desk—never to be looked at or talked about again. I learned to detest writing in any form and to avoid it as often as possible. I also learned that writing was a task kids did while the teacher was concerned with more important jobs of correcting math tests and spelling quiz papers. Writing was busy work and nothing more.

Twenty years have passed, but I am still as violently opposed to the "Blue Boy Method" as I was as an eight year old. Kids need to become excited about their writing, but before this can happen they need a sense of purpose. They need to have a reason for putting their ideas onto a blank sheet of paper. My main goal is to help kids develop a positive attitude toward writing. I want them to enjoy seeing their words in print. I attempt to accomplish this by providing kids with an environment in which:

1) Kids are free to experiment with their words. There is always a great deal of oral language, lots of talking going on in the classroom.

2) Kids are constantly challenged to observe, write and discuss.

3) There are incubation periods, times to be alone with yourself and your thoughts.

4) There is always a sense of expectation. Writing experiences are varied from day to day.

5) There are diversified activity periods, times for kids to work with experiments and ideas and to learn how to keep written records of what they did.

6) Kids are taught specific skills as they relate directly to weaknesses in their writing.

7) They are bombarded with their completed writing. Papers are assembled into booklets, hung from the ceiling, or tacked to the walls.

8) Kids read each other's work constantly—offering criticisms as well as positive strokes.

4. WRITING ACTIVITIES

This chapter is set up to give teachers ideas for writing assignments. However, a list of topics, no matter how exciting, is not enough. So the ideas for assignments are within descriptions of major paradigms for writing activities. The paradigms seem essential to me, although they are by no means the only useful frameworks for composition activities. I include these because they seem to me to answer specific problems or issues in composition instruction. This chapter includes descriptions of nine paradigms.

1. THE PREWRITE—WRITE—POSTWRITE—REWRITE CYCLE

This cycle of activities embodies several assumptions. It recognizes that writing is a form of communication: so the cycle surrounds writing with talk and with distinct audiences; it emphasizes activities which utilize the writing children do. It also recognizes that writing is a form of thinking (as well as a form for cementing thoughts once they are complete): so the cycle provides time for children to listen to what they have written, to hear others' responses, and to change their words. [1]

Prewriting

Prewriting activities deal with a particular problem: how to start children's composing process. Good prewriting activities engage children in observation, in experience--hands-on, feet-on, tongue-on, and nose-near experiences--in simulations, or in reading. Discussion follows, and only later comes writing. Discussion almost always occurs no matter what other prewriting activities go on. In discussion ideas germinate, points of view shift, tones change.

Prewriting Discussion

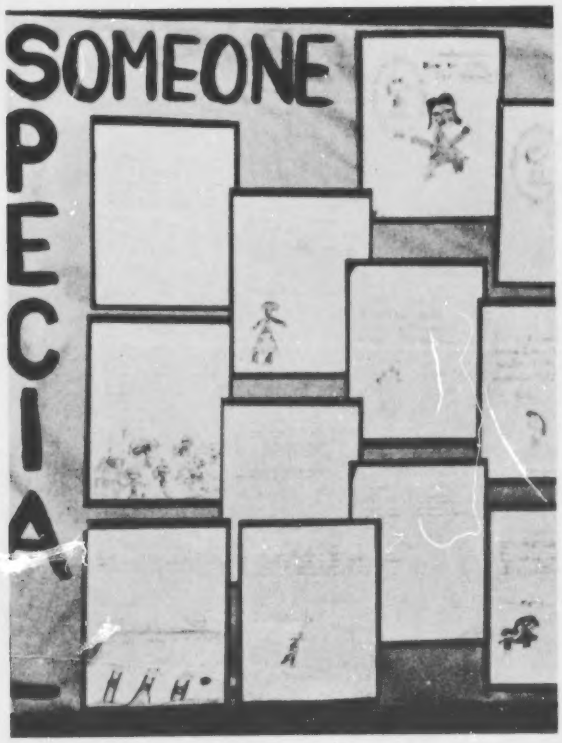
[1] This cycle is at the heart of the work of James Moffett. See Chapter five for a discussion of his work.

Teachers need not fear talking about the actual writing: let discussions wrestle with the same topic or questions with which the writing will struggle.

Here is an example of an assignment and possible prewriting activities. Each child is to interview another and write the interview onto a large poster-size sheet of butcher paper. The interviews will then be hung around the classroom. Prewriting activities could begin with children brainstorming the kinds of information they are interested in learning about their peers. Once they generate that list, the children can classify topics: fact, opinion, feelings; or, personal, home, school; or feelings, activities. The children make their own categories. Then, if there are too many categories, children can select their three or four favorites, individually or as a group.

Before the actual interviewing, one other discussion should take place. Children should brainstorm possible graphic formats for the recorded interview; unless this sort of discussion precedes the interviewing, children not inclined to be artistic will present the interview in a boring linear format:

1. Name: _____
2. Age: _____
3. Favorite food: _____



Discussion leads to writing which is shared on a bulletin board.

However, after brainstorming, many children will think of fresh ways to present the material. At a recent workshop sponsored by the Instructional Labs, participating teachers brainstormed several possible graphic formats for their interviews: concentric circles, a tree, cartoons, a collage, a crossword puzzle, a rainbow, and the solar system with larger planets containing more important information.

Now the children are ready to interview each other--still a prewriting activity. They should record the data on a sheet of paper, then retire to a corner to map them onto a poster.

Interviewing a Classmate

I will discuss this example again in the description of postwriting activities, but at this point, the purposes of the prewriting should be clear. The assignment has a *use:* the children will learn more about each other. The assignment has a clear *audience:* the other children will read the recorded interview. And the prewriting activities help the children sharpen their perception of the assignment's purpose and audience.

One could list dozens of different kinds of prewriting activities. Here are a few. Keeping a journal can be a prewriting activity if writing assignments are based upon expanding a favorite entry. One worthwhile teaching strategy is having children jot down a few impressions following a film, field trip, or demonstration before discussion begins. These notes then give students a place to look when groping for topics to discuss. That note-taking, part of the record process discussed at greater length in Paradigm Nine (Record-Report-Generalize, p. 98), lends itself to many situations before, during, or after prewriting discussions. If descriptive writing is the goal, pass out a potato or a walnut to each child. Direct the children to study their potato, place it in a pile of potatoes, then try to find it again. Later ask them to write a description so that a peer can select that potato or

walnut from a set of three or five or ten. Such close observation and testing precedes descriptive writing. Primary, intermediate, and middle-school teachers use different objects, but the same activity.

Exploration and *discussion* seem to be the key words in describing prewriting activities. But they are not the only ones: ***improvise, act out, share, brainstorm, draw, listen, make notes, remember, observe, collect*** and ***chart*** are all words that describe good prewriting activities.

As we turn from prewriting activities to the writing aspect of the cycle, several summary statements are in order. The first is categorical: teachers should rarely if ever give children a writing assignment with no prewriting activities. The second is that teachers should find a way to give children a quiet time for solitary thought after the noisy, interactive prewriting activities. The third is that interactive explorational prewriting activities are as appropriate in the upper grades as they are in primary grades.

Writing

Putting pencil to paper can take many forms. Give children choices of media: pens, felt markers, chalk, finger paints, water colors, block-print letters, typewriters, and even hammer, chisel, and stone are media classrooms should include. Pencil and ink are inappropriate for some messages: banners, signs and billboards, newspapers, and maxims require either type or large letters.

Besides choosing media, teachers and children have another important choice when writing: how many persons should write together? Most writing occurs in solitary confinement, but that need not be the sole writing situation. Pairs, small groups, and large groups of people can compose together. Rogers and Hart, Nordoff and Hall, Woodward and Bernstein, and advertising agency teams work together as did the translators of the King James version of the Bible.

Another option for writing is essential in almost every grade: dictation. Certainly young children need secretaries to whom they can dictate their compositions. Children can compose before they master the technology of grip and handwriting. How limited will be the creations of seven year olds if they have to print every letter of their message. One excellent group of secretaries is upper-grade students. However, even upper grade students deserve a scribe occasionally. Another student, the teachers, volunteer adults, tape recorders, and dictaphones can record a student's compositions. By sometimes freeing students from the physical act of composition, we enable them to create in forms other than brief reports.

Postwriting

Postwriting activities answer two central questions: "Why write?" and "How can classroom activities have continuity?" Postwriting activities give a purpose to each writing assignment, and, if done well, they will give rise to many activities based upon the writing.

Postwriting begins by sharing what is written with an audience. Writing profits from an audience, and one quality of mature writers is their ability to anticipate the needs and responses of their audience. So a teacher, whose goal is to assist children become mature writers, makes sure that each assignment has an audience, that children are aware of who the audience will be, and that the audience has time to respond to and appreciate the

writing. The writer can read his work to a small group, comment on it first, and invite the response of the others. These groups can also function as editorial groups: their comments may lead to revisions or rewriting. Or, children can read their myths, folk tales, and fables to younger children. Pieces addressed to the public can go on bulletin boards inside or outside the classroom or they can go into a newspaper. Science write-ups should accompany displays; written rules belong with games.

Teachers may receive and value the writing of their students. Valuing a child's writing means paying attention to the content of the writing: what interests does the child indicate, what social situations concern the child, what attitudes is the child valuing? These and other questions lead a teacher to topics for conferences with a student and to topics for follow-up assignments which may not involve writing at all. In this valuing process, a teacher recognizes that the content of a piece is important to the student, and the student views the teacher as a trusted adult.

Displayed writing provides an opportunity for different types of postwriting activities. As an example, recall the prewriting example of the interviews. After the finished interview sheets are taped or pinned to the wall, children can read them, write follow-up questions, or explain their own to the class as a way of self-introduction. The teachers can use displayed interviews to provide examples for the current grammar, spelling, reading, or dictionary skills lesson: "Can anyone find a digraph? . . . Can anyone find two words that start with 'K'?" and so forth. (See Paradigm Seven for further discussion of the uses of displayed writing, p. 91.)

The information in these interview sheets can lead to other postwriting activities: what are the students' favorite rewards; what scares them; what foods do they hate? All of these bits of information can in turn provide grist for postwriting discussions and possible writing assignments on food or nutrition, on fears and fantasies, on rewards, on TV shows, or whatever. Students could also graph favorite foods as a math exercise.

One pattern emerges: postwriting activities for one piece of writing can develop into prewriting activities for another. With new sets of questions, children can later interview their parents, their friends from other classrooms, their grandparents, and so on. Or the interviews can give rise to Life Maps, to scrapbooks, to collages, or to other forms of self presentation. It is here one finds continuity in the "creative" activities of an elementary school classroom.

"LIFE MAPS"
THESE MAPS ILLUSTRATE FAVORITE HAPPENINGS, IMPORTANT PEOPLE AND FAVORITE POSSESSIONS IN OUR LIVES.
"Life Maps"

Life Maps

Rewriting

Rewriting includes but is more than the correcting of mistakes in punctuation, spelling, and capitalization: that is proofreading and recopying. Rewriting also follows the students' discovery that they have neither said what they meant nor meant what they said. Often the process of insight is this:

Audience: "I don't understand this part."
Writer: "Well, I meant to say this and so."
Audience: "Well, then, write that just as you said it now!"
Writer: "O.K., I will!"

Writing helps jar the contents of our mind; then, with one precise push from our audience, everything rapidly falls into place, and we are able to write it down right the second time.

Rewriting activities speak to several problems and realities. The reality is that writing is difficult and few products will be perfect. Through rewriting activities--editorial groups and conferences--students can work through some of those difficulties rather than experience only the distressing finality of a red pen's marks.

Rewriting following a discussion or conference can also precede other postwriting activities, particularly if the piece is going before an entire class or the general public.

2. WRITE ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Two standard uses of composition--as material for correction and as unexamined creative expression--seldom improve writing skills and rarely sharpen a student's thinking. This paradigm, Writing Across the Curriculum, weds thought to writing and the two processes improve together. Two basic insights support this approach to composition: we do children a disservice and we do writing a disservice if we contain writing in either the creative writing (poetic) box or the expository box (topic sentence, five paragraph theme). Similarly we do children a disservice if we present writing only as "creative writing" for four or five grades and later only as exposition. Writing enables children to record thoughts, to record observations, to write up an activity, to explain models, and to give directions. Writing is a process of thought as well as a record of thought. As process and record it is as appropriate to science, math, and social studies as it is to language arts. Writing is an untapped resource in each of these curriculum areas: it is a process which can be part of a child's inquiry in any subject. Read in table 5, for instance, idea charts written by Sarah Dandridge as illustrations for her workshop for teachers on Writing Across the Curriculum. See pg. 71-72.

To assure that writing goes on in many situations, a teacher should recognize three uses the writing process can have. Then, whenever an activity is planned or underway, the teacher can examine the activity for its connection to any of these three uses.

1. Writing provides a record, in fragments and phrases, of ideas, impressions, and thoughts, as they occur. We can borrow a phrase from James Moffett and call this "Writing down." Here writing helps the process of thought and aids fluency.

2. Writing provides a record, in sentences usually, of a completed activity. Here writing provides an historical record. Again we can borrow a phrase from Moffett and call this "Writing up."

3. Writing provides explanation or instructions to an audience who wants to understand a game, a model, an experiment, or a display. Moffett's phrase here is "Writing out."

Writing across the curriculum has one important psychological implication. Ours is a culture which hates to write: ask teachers to write a poem, a report, or a journal and the response may well be discomfort if not outright hostility. We learn to fear writing in part because our writing is frequently received with criticism and in part because writing assignments in school so often had meaning only for a composition grade: they had no specific audience other than the teacher armed with red pen, and they had no connection to any activity other than the writing itself. Writing across the curriculum puts writing in the context of other inquiry: writing becomes one tool, frequently used, to assist children to think and decide. It becomes a tool like conversation, observation, reading, and computation.

Here is a partial list of situations appropriate for writing across the curriculum; there are many others which will occur to teachers if they think about writing when planning the day:

1. Writing down:

   After seeing a film, reading something, or completing an activity, but before discussing it, children jot down impressions, key events, or key words that will assist them in the discussion.

   Use phrases and fragments to record discussions as they proceed.

   Urge children to take brief notes during discussions that precede writing.

   Urge children to note questions and areas of concern before teacher-student conferences.

   Use phrases and fragments to record field trips, science experiments, and other observations as they proceed. Use journals for this recording, both personal journals and classroom journals open to the writing of all students.

2. Writing up:

   Use write ups, in personal form, for as many events as possible: science experiments, nature walks, field trips, class meetings, interviews, books read, sporting events entered, and crafts projects. Writing up should be expressive; the child's record of participation.

   Writing up includes journal entries and reports for the class or school newspaper.

3. Writing out:

   Children write out directions to games they invent, to recipes of favorite foods, and to any moveable models they construct.

   Children write out explanations for any models they build or displays they construct.

   Children label posters or art or displays they construct.

   Occasionally have children write out math problems in word-problem form.

Of course, writing across the curriculum fits perfectly in the glove of prewriting and postwriting activities. The nature walk in science class is part of prewriting. Sharing written observations of the walk is one possible postwriting activity. For additional discussions of writing across the curriculum, see the section on James Britton, in Chapter Five, and the several books and pamphlets referred to in that chapter.

Making a Collage is Fun!

TABLE 5
by Sarah Dandridge, Joaquin Moraga Middle School
Moraga School District

WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Writing is a *learning tool:* as such it may be incorporated into all areas of the curriculum. It serves many purposes and takes different forms.

Social Studies

There are many possibilities in addition to objective reporting
(try this one in a more personal voice)
Examples:
Radio shows
Slide shows
Maps
Newspapers
Advice to ————
Famous sayings of ————
Diaries
Logs
Letters
Historical fiction, serious and humorous, is exciting and possible if enough preparation is done; use films, music, stories, books; discussion (ties in with reading); diaries and letters develop a voice well. Use geography also: "Discovering a new land," "Describe land from plant or animal's point of view," "Give map directions," or "Write clues for treasure hunts."

Art & Music

Both of these areas enrich and aid the curriculum. The history of art and music is an engrossing way to teach social studies.
Art projects often stimulate writing (a K, 1, and 2nd grade trick). As kids construct, they talk and develop ideas, stories, descriptions--all great prewriting! Puppets, hats, models, clay, stitchery, collages, abstract painting, and murals are a few examples. Connect art to other subjects.
Songs and chants reinforce oral language. Once kids learn a song, they can fill in missing words and phrases. Then they are ready to compose their own.

Point of View: Integrating the Curriculum

1. Begin by passing out and discussing optical illusions.
2. Read and role play skits on conflict. Kids create their own from experience. They switch roles and discuss point of view.
3. *Art:* teach block 3-D lettering and the drawing of visual illusions (use Escher).
4. *Writing:* My life as a pencil, a baseball, etc. Lots of talk first. Also read aloud *Here's Looking at You!* (Harlin-Quist).
5. *Mapping:* using any materials, two people work together without seeing what the other is doing. One gives directions, the other follows; each should end up with identical drawing or construction.
6. *Social Studies:* using the books *Voices from the Southwest* and *Cultures in Conflict,* present two viewpoints of the Mexican-American war. Then discuss the contrast; role play, debate, dramatize. Then write some historical fiction.

Science:

- Hang up some X-rays obtained from a local hospital, doctor, or dentist.

  You are an X-ray about to make your first public appearance:

  How do you feel?
  What do you do to get ready?
  What words of advice do you have for other X-rays?
  Don't be too vain!

Writing possibilities range from the sublime to the serious!

- Write up experiments
- Write up observations
- Become part of the unit: "One day in the life of a muscle"; "Be a plant or animal--describe your environment."
- Give a scientific lecture
- Have a sense of humor

Math:

Use information from interviews to make a graph. Choose a subject or subjects and title your graph. When you're finished, take a note card and describe what your graph shows.

Math and Writing:

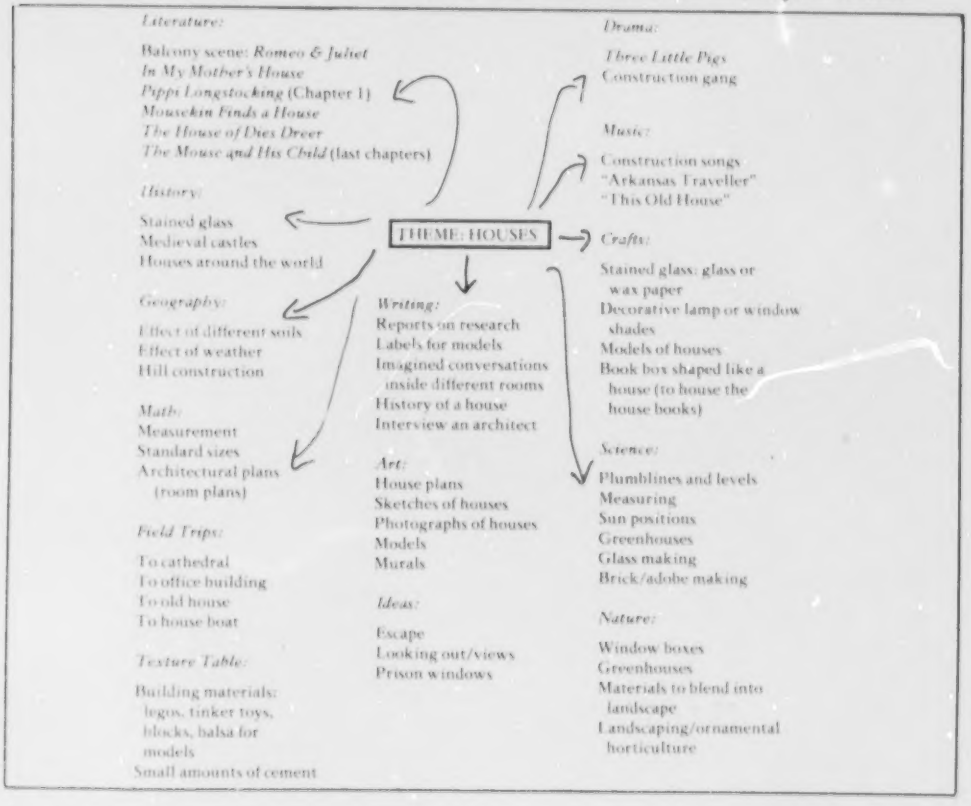
- Title and describe graphs
- Children write word problems and riddles
- Personify numbers and math terminology:
  The Googleplex (or the rhomboid or the pi or the isosceles triangle) is coming! Discuss and predict who or what it is. Draw it, write advice to it, ask it questions, describe the care and feeding of it, describe its relatives, give its life history! Tape its life using the voice of a Googleplex.

3. UTILIZE THEMES AS CONTEXTS FOR WRITING

"Utilize Themes," as does "Writing Across the Curriculum," addresses the problems of providing continuity in curriculum and using writing as a tool for thought and learning. The study of any major undertaking in our culture potentially involves us in every subject. For example, if a classroom were to study houses, ***windows*** alone would provide discussions of history (stained glass), science (making glass), math (measurement, proportion), aesthetics (placement, decoration), and other subjects: the decision to place a window includes attention to the sun's path, to the height of people, to the size of the room, and to exterior decor. Further, one could buttress the study of windows by reading or enacting balcony scenes, singing serenades, planting window boxes, looking at drapery and curtain fabrics, and discussing shutters, shades, storm windows, and sashes. Tinted windows, sealed windows, and broken windows are each part of social, political, and economic welfare. Windows open onto many possibilities for projects and discussions.

Study Units

Here is an outline for a study unit on houses. This chart is modelled on the framework Eileen Haggitt uses in ***Projects in the Primary School.***[2] Her book presents about fifteen such charts and narrative descriptons of how to use each one for several days or weeks.



[2]London: Longmans, 1975.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

In using a chart such as "Houses" one process requires attention: to draw arrows does not suggest the *logic* of the connection. In the terms introduced in our discussion of Josephine Miles (see Chapter Six), the arrows in themselves suggest no specific predication. "Houses" is not a topic for writing. Neither is "My House" or "My Dream House." Out of discussions, study, and other prewriting activities, the theme and the controlling ideas develop. Rather than writing about window boxes, then, a child would write directions on how to construct a window box or how to care for one, or the child could write an explanatory label for one — what it is, how it works. Directions on how to care for one might be controlled by "First — then — then — " A discussion of the different placements or different plants for a window box might be controlled by "if — then" or "therefore — because" or "on the one hand — on the other." The purpose of the piece gives it a logic; the specificity of a writing task helps define predication.

Writing fits naturally into study units. Children write up any research they do in brief reports which can be part of the classroom's journal on the unit; children compose songs; each unit presents opportunities for poetic writing such as "My Dream House"; children have opportunities for expressive and informational writing, "The View from My Window"; they can write a report for parents, letters to guests or to field trip hosts, or letters requesting information necessary for studying the unit. Models need explanatory labels, and assembly kits need written directions. Much of this writing is informational, yet it is neither a research paper nor writing without a particular audience. Clarity is the virtue children strive for rather than length, paragraph form, topic sentences, or the impersonal voice.

Theme Days

Thematic units in a shorter form are theme days. Often these are holiday or seasonal themes, but they have other possibilities. "Rabbit Day," for instance, can include a small-group project to construct a papier mâché rabbit, the presence in the classroom of rabbit skins and live rabbits, book contracts begun or completed on ***Mr. Bear and the Robbers, Peter Rabbit, Rabbit Hill, Watership Down,*** or ***Alice in Wonderland,*** the construction of a rabbit-shaped book box, the building of a hutch, cooking rabbit stew, studying rabbits' muscular structure (with biology-text illustrations), and doing creative things such as writing biographies of little-known rabbits in history or the Easter Bunny or the March Hare, ascribing quotations to George Washington Rabbit and Queen Elizabeth Rabbit, selling a favorite rabbit book, and enacting a play of Flopsie, Mopsie, and Cottontail's eventful day. The artwork, biographies, and quotations can decorate the walls.[3]

Finally, theme days can include contests. Writing contests begin several weeks before the day of prizes, and they connect easily to theme days and holiday celebrations. Children often write enthusiastically, particularly if several contests run simultaneously and each child can choose one or two to enter. One October, children in a fourth-fifth grade classroom in Alameda had these contests to choose among: (The words which suggest predication are in italics.)

[3] These examples come from an unpublished thematic unit by James Musante, Los Perales School, Moraga (California).

1. The Wonderful Witch of the West

   Write a story telling about your witch. Give her a name, tell *what* she does, tell *where* she lives, tell *why* she is wonderful, and illustrate your story.

2. Brewing the Best

   Create a brew of your own which will *change* something or someone into something else. Write your brew in recipe or poetic form, and illustrate your brew contributions.

3. A Mystery in the Making

   Write a chiller-thriller: include unique characters, a "with-it" plot, a mysterious environment, and a fabulous conclusion. (No predication.)

4. A Haunted House Happening

   Create a haunted house. Write a poem, description, or riddle about your haunted house *happening*. Also, draw the most fantastic haunted house imaginable with chalk on a black piece of paper. Design it with doors and windows which open and close. *Draw strange happenings* that one can see through the window.

5. The Greatest Ghost as Your Halloween Host

   Create a ghastly or gay ghost. Name it, give it a ghostly existence, and *provide it with a problem* with which it copes.[4]

Like everything else, contests improve with prewriting. Drama, drawing, designing greeting cards, making a bulletin board for the classroom, playing vocabulary games, and reading ghost stories and mysteries are all possibilities which assist children to generate ideas, characters, voices, and the right verbs and modifiers to improve their contest entries.

Prize-winning projects receive recognition on the theme day: as post-writing activities, students read their stories and poems and display their arts and crafts projects. Seeing children write with enjoyment rewards a teacher's substantial effort to organize and inspire themes and contests.

4. PROVIDE LITERARY STRUCTURES

This paradigm addresses the problem every blank, clean, white page presents: terror of writing. Provide children with a familiar structure for their work, and composition will come more easily. Adults and children have great trouble writing in part because we stare at the blank, white page without a sense of the form our writing can take. Yet, we are all conversant with many literary forms from very young ages. Rather than hand students blank pages with instructions to "Write about whatever you want" or "Write about your day" or "Write about this picture," we can hand them paper and suggest a literary form. The form provides the framework, the writer fills in the frame.

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[4] Celia Reyes Hailey provided these contest topics. Her prize-winning brew changed her into a woman of leisure who didn't have to teach for a living.

TABLE 6

He was coming toward them. Then they began to run, and threw themselves into their father's arms. The man had not known one happy hour since he had left the children in the forest; the woman, however, was dead. Gretel emptied her pinafore until pearls ran about the room . . . then all anxiety was at an end, and they lived together in perfect happiness. – Grimm by way of Lang (and Humperdink)	. . . whom should they see but their father, who had been searching day and night for his lost children. Now he was overjoyed to see them. He held his little ones close and covered them with kisses. When they were safely home, the woodcutter told them how their stepmother had run away. Frightened by the evil things she had done, she had left the cottage and had never been seen since. Now with the gold and treasures they had found, the little family need never worry about being poor again . . . they lived safe and happy forever. – Aunglund	They were home at last! The wood-cutter was all alone in the house. His wife had died while the children were away. He put his arms around his children and kissed them. And they all cried a little bit because they were so happy. Then Gretel opened her apron. All the pearls and diamonds came rolling out . . . "Now we will have plenty to eat," said Hansel. "Now we will be happy together," said Gretel. And they did live happily after that, and had plenty to eat. – I Kan Reed
. . . and they ran all the way home. Father hugged them in great joy. Stepmother begged forgiveness and kissed them tearfully. They lived happily ever after. – Anonymous	Upon sight of them, their father gave a cry of joy, and their stepmother shrieked with rage, stamped her feet, and vanished in a burst of foul smoke. –a la Rumpelstiltskin	They ran into the cottage. With the pearls and precious gems, they stoned their stepmother, drove her from the house and chased her to a clifff's edge where she slipped and fell to her death. – Jack Hailey
Who should they see but their father. Upon sight of them he gave a cry of joy, but Hansel and Gretel called him a waffling, spineless twit; with their stepmother they set up their own household and were soon the richest in the country. – Celeste Myers	And the hard-hearted step-mother, where was she? Well, I'll tell you. When Hansel and Gretel seemed to be gone for good, the woman saw that her husband could think of nothing but his lost children. This made her so angry that she packed up her things in a large red handkerchief and ran away. She never came back, and Hansel and Gretel and their good father lived happily ever after. – Wanda Gag	Write your own here:

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Here is an example: fourth and fifth graders who have trouble filling a page with their large, fully-rounded script may enthusiastically write several pages in a newspaper format. The teacher may give them newspapers to imitate or give them lists of kinds of stories to include (sports, weather, jokes, advice column, news, interview, photo, etc.) or break a large piece of paper into columns with penciled headings for the kind of story to go in each place. For theme days (see Paradigm Three, Utilize Themes, p. 73) the newspaper can record the other activities going on in the classroom. Children can work individually, in pairs, or small groups.

Here are other examples. Kindergarten and first-grade children can write and illustrate ABC books. ABC books provide an absolutely foolproof framework: children know what comes next. Young children can also write folk tales if teachers give incidents stitched together: three brothers, an old woman, three tasks, and a rescued princess can combine into a number of different tales. Attached, as Table 6, is a set of sample endings to "Hansel and Gretel." A teacher might choose one or two to demonstrate a point about the nature of folk tales, then ask students to write their own ending. To demonstrate the interchangeability of folk episodes, a teacher might choose to read Grimm's ending and the ending "a la Rumplestiltskin," then urge children to fit the ending of another folk tale onto "Hansel and Gretel." The table of Hansel and Gretel endings may well suggest activities outside the paradigm of literary structures. Such compilations of story variations can lead to the writing of imitations--an activity described in Paradigm Six.

Many poetic forms are accessible to children from young ages: rhythmic chants are within reach of a preschooler's improvisations; children in intermediate grades can handle limericks, junior high students do well with cinquains, diamond poems, and concrete poetry.

Cinquain:
Line 1: Write a noun
Line 2: Write two adjectives which describe the noun
Line 3: Write three verbs which tell what the noun does
Line 4: Write a thought about your noun
Line 5: Repeat the original noun or write a synonym.

Diamond:
Line 1: Write a noun
Line 2: Write two adjectives which describe the noun
Line 3: Write three –ing words (participles) which describe the noun
Line 4: Write four nouns related the subject.The second two should refer to the word on line 7
Line 5: Write three –ing words that connect to word on line 7
Line 6: Write two adjectives describing the word on line 7
Line 7: Write a noun the opposite of your subject.

Concrete Poetry: A concrete poem is a picture made of letters or words. It appeals to the eye as well as the mind. The message springs from the words and from the arrangement of words and letters.[5] (See p. 92.)

[5] The examples are from Jane Waxenberg's poetry assignments, Piedmont Junior High School, Piedmont (California).

Our goal at the center of this paradigm "Providing Structures" is to enable children to succeed, to say "I can!" Our language and our literature have many forms in which we are all conversant. Even adults might be surprised to realize how many forms of language interaction and of literature they know, participate in, hear daily, and can utilize in writing. Here is a list of some literary forms that elementary school teachers can use to structure writing assignments:

ABC books
Counting books (One Was Johnny)
Books of months (*Chicken Soup with Rice*)
Books of days ("Solomon Grundy")
Books of seasons (Burningham's *Seasons*)

Nursery Rhymes
Counting out rhymes
Taunts
Chants (Jump rope songs)
"Called" songs ("No more pie," included on p. 83)

Folk tales
Fables
Fairy tales
Tall tales
Tales of origins ("How the bear lost its tail")

Creation tales
Myths
Dialogues: with doctors, dentists, parents of friends, police
Dialogues: with best friends, enemies, strange children
Dialogues: with clerks, clergy, letter carriers, baby sitters

Invitations: to play, to parties
Thank you notes
Vacation post cards: from Disneyland, from the beach
Diary entries: on great days, on terrible days
Show and tell descriptions

Facial descriptions (blazons)
Movie (or TV show) plots
Nature cycles
Recipes
Directions for games

Commercials (with strict time limits of 5 seconds, 10 seconds, and 30 seconds)
Burma Shave poems
Limericks
Captions to pictures and cartoons
Kenneth Koch poems [6]

Want ads
Telegrams
Tombstones
Maxims and adages
Bumper stickers

Book titles
Slogans
T-shirt insignias
Song titles
Graffiti

Headlines
Fortune-cookie notes
"25 words or less" contests
World's shortest movie reviews
Two-word poems

Couplets, including blues stanzas
Stories with alliterative lines (See
ABC books such as *Alligators All Around and I Love My Anteater with an A*)
Tattoos
Gossip
Police all-points bulletins

Anonymous letters: words cut from newspapers
Wanted posters
Concert posters
Contest announcements
Election posters
Billboards

Messages in code
Road signs
Trail guides
Titles for paintings and sculptures
Neon signs
Business "jingles"

---

[6] In *Wishes, Lies, and Dreams* (New York: Vintage, 1970), Kenneth Koch describes teaching children to write poetry. He discusses poems about wishes ("I wish . . . "), comparisons, noises, dreams, metaphors, lies, colors, and other topics. Some of his poems are in syntactic frameworks: "I used to . . . But now . . . " and "I seem to be . . . But really I am . . . " are two such frames.

Balloons for cartoons or comic books
Scripts for pantomime and charades
Scripts for playlets of key social situations
Scripts for scenes from favorite books
Transcriptions of recorded speech (with or without stage directions)

Familiar stories retold
Biographies of family members
Biographies written from tombstones or short obituaries
Autobiographies
Coming-of-age stories (rites of passage)

Get-well and other greeting cards
Autograph books and yearbooks (See the scholastic paperback, *Yours Til Niagra Falls*)
Slam books
Id writing: night stories about falling, descriptions of recurrent nightmares, descriptions of chases and of running without moving, stories of shrinking (*Alice, Gulliver, Stuart Little*)

This list is but a partial one of the kinds of writing--each usually with its own strict form--which we encounter regularly and respond to. Children know many of these forms even when they do not know the names.

Providing structures for children's writing can be part of the Prewrite-Write-etc. cycle (Paradigm 1), "Write Across the Curriculum," (Paradigm 2), and "Utilize Themes, (Paradigm 3). Children can discuss the form during prewriting discussions, read examples, and try out their own in small groups.

The strength of this Paradigm--my own personal favorite--is its recognition that our daily encounters with language take forms which are distinct and intuitively known to each of us. Using that knowledge in composition assignments gives each student a chance to succeed at writing, to finish an assignment that is a recognizable whole.

5. WRITE IMITATIONS

Some of these paradigms overlap: "Write Imitations" is closely connected both to literary structures and to sentence combining (Paradigm Six). However, it addresses a specific problem which occurs in different forms at different grade levels. In Chapter Two, in the discussion of the critical skills which develop from K through 8, we note that vivid description is a critical need of papers at one age while action verbs provide a critical difference between excellent and weak papers at another age. Here is a paradigm designed to assist children in building vocabulary power for specific units of writing, such as verbs or descriptors or nouns.

Imitations, or paraphrases, can take two forms. The first is a fill-in-the-blanks game. Take a paragraph or selected sentences from a piece of children's literature. Delete the action verbs or the adjectives or the prepositional phrases, and have children fill in the blanks. Again, this activity need not be done individually: pairs or groups of children can work together. Also, teachers need not use such an exercise to drill children on the *names* of parts of speech; a child's internal grammar will lead him to pick a word that fits, and his ear will judge the result.

She began to set the room in order. She___ the mats out at the front door and___them straight. She___the clock and the ornaments on the mantlepiece, and she___and___the tables and chairs.
B. Potter, *The Pie and the Patty Pan*

Suddenly the wind___the water into sharp, choppy waves. It___off the sharp tops and___them into ribbons of smokey spray. Then the rain comes___(ing) down. The wind___in stronger and stronger gusts. A branch___from a tree. A gull___over, flying backwards,___(ing) for a chance to drop into the lee of the island. Out in the channel a tardy fishing boat___in the waves,___(ing) the shelter of Bucks Harbor.
R. McCloskey, *Time of Wonder*

Beauty's life in the enchanted palace and gardens was filled with delight as the Beast had promised. In the___of the palace stood___containing delicately made___and___from all over the world for her to examine and play with. She loved___, and the___of the palace played the___she loved best, wherever she walked, for as long as she wished. She loved___, and books of the best___with the best___opened themselves before her when she sat down to read. She loved___and silky-haired___purred round her feet; little___ran ahead of her wherever she went. In the___golden___swan up from the depths of dark___to gaze at her and ___came to nibble at her fingertips.___and all the other kinds shade her from the heat of the___. The singing of___outside her woke her every___and at___she fell asleep to the___of the___.
P. Pearse, *Beauty and the Beast*

The hut was as the Prince had told them. A___layer of dust covered the___tables and benches. A spider had spu n an___web in one corner, but even the web was___. On a___hearthstone lay the___remnants of a___fire. Near the hearth, a number of___crockpots,___and___now, had been overturned.___bowls and___jars, shattered into fragments were strewn about the floor. The hut was___; the noises of the forest did not enter.
L. Alexander, *The Castle of Llyr*

Ideally, as they read, teachers watch for descriptive passages which depend for their vividness on verbs or nouns or adjectives, on alliteration or metaphor or assonance. A card file of these examples grows quickly giving teachers examples to share with students or to give to students in paraphrase exercises. In my own reading for samples, I was struck by the dependence individual writers have on distinct parts of speech or sentence units.

McCloskey's writing depends heavily on alliteration, Pearce's on nouns, and Alexander's on adjectives. This strike verified for me the rich mine awaiting teachers who delve in books looking for gems to present to children for imitation.

The second form of imitation exercises is akin to sentence combining exercises. Give students sentences from good literature, and ask the students to write sentences which have the same structure but different content. As with sentence combining, the child's ear is the guide.[7]

Here are two examples:

> The tin seal, her hooks and draggled feathers drooping about her head, sat on the branch and looked at the darkening sky.
> R. Hoban
>
> The excited child, his towel and inflated ball clutched to his chest, stood on the beach and watched the spouting whale.
> Student's imitation.
>
> The wild things roared their terrible roars, gnashed their terrible teeth, rolled their terrible eyes and showed their terrible claws.
> M. Sendak
>
> Santa Claus laughed his merry laugh, flashed his merry teeth, winked his merry eyes, and tugged his merry beard.
> Student's imitation.

These imitations may seem at first glance to be most appropriate for older children. While that impression is probably true, even preschool children enjoy the imitation of repeated rhythms and rhymes. The following chants set off a few improvisations.

(sing):
"Boa Constrictor"
I'm being eaten by a boa constrictor
a boa constrictor
a boa constrictor
I'm being eaten by a boa constrictor
And I don't like it one bit.

(chant):
Oh no, it's got my toe
Oh gee, it's got my knee
Oh fiddle, it's got my middle
Oh darn, it's got my arm
Oh heck, it's got my neck
Oh dred, it's got my (gulp).

[7] I borrow this idea from an unpublished inservice presentation by Stephanie Gray, Foothill High School, Pleasanton (California), "Imitations, Interviews, and Saturation Reporting," 1976.

"No More Pie"
(chanted):
Oh my
I wanna piece of pie
The pie's too sweet
I wanna piece of meat
The meat's too red
I wanna piece of bread
The bread's too brown
I wanna go to town
The town's too far
I better take my car
The car's too slow
I fell and stubbed my toe
My toe had a pain
I better take a train
The train had a wreck
I fell and broke my neck
Oh my
No more pie!

Preschool children will let the rhythm and rhyme scheme carry their improvisations, and even though some of those improvisations become nonsense, the structure remains; the child is in control.

Figures of speech are another form of language which children can quickly imitate. Here, as elsewhere, the technical name for the figure is unimportant. Burden not our children with the difference between "metaphor" and "simile," "synecdoche" and "metonymy," "hyperbole" and "epanarthosis"; children will sense the difference given several examples and the challenge to create their own.

These imitation activities are actually a sub-set of our fourth paradigm, Providing Structures. Without the pattern being analyzed, children will notice it and put it to work. Similarly, when asking for imitation of sentences, a teacher must provide some sample imitations as well as the original. Let the process be inductive. Children will catch on quickly enough.

Such imitations, if well-chosen for syntax and structure, can complement sentence-combining exercises. Again, teachers will run across examples in their own reading.

6. TEACH SENTENCE COMBINING

Sentence combining may well solve several problems in teaching composition: it may give teachers a way around traditional grammar, the scourge of many children; it should assist children to develop a working understanding of coordination and subordination; and, it should help children write longer sentences.

However, teachers must pay a price, although we hope it is not a great one. The following pages are packed with cues, explanations, and examples. I have tried to make the examples entertaining to mediate the sting of the cues and explanations. Yet, I realize that sentence combining is new to most people and foreign in its format. I ask a deep breath of each reader and the willing suspension of disbelief.

The payoffs are enormous for the patient teacher who studies this paradigm with care. In 1973, Frank O'Hare published *Sentence Combining: Improving Student Writing Without Formal Grammar Instruction.*[8] He demonstrates that sentence-combining exercises contribute to improved writing in seventh grade classes. Other, less formal studies, find it a valuable activity with children at least as young as fourth graders.

The principles are simple: students, ***without direct reference to grammar*** and explanation, follow cues to change sentences from positive to negative or from statement to question, or to combine two or more sentences into one sentence. Here are a couple of examples: (A is the sentence or sentences to be combined. B is the new, combined sentence. The cues are in capitals.)

A. Ed was eating something from the floor. (WHAT-QUES)
B. What was Ed eating from the floor?

A. Shakespeare will blow city kids away. (NEG-EVER)
B. Shakespeare will never blow city kids away.

A. Hitchcock noticed something.
There were nine bodies in the river. (THAT)
B. Hitchcock noticed that there were nine bodies in the river.

Teachers introduce the cues one at a time. The final authority for students is their ear: does the sentence sound right after they combine the elements? There lies the beauty of the approach: one's intuitive sense of language, one's internal grammar, guides the process.

The goal of sentence-combining exercises is to enable children to move from writing a series of simple sentences to writing longer compound or complex sentences. The process aims at "sentence maturity": in English prose, sentence maturity seems directly connected to a writer's ability to use subordination, to vary sentence length, and to vary syntactic structure. Sentence-combining exercises seem to give students those tools which lead to sentence maturity, and the exercises themselves succeed in part because they eschew grammatical terminology. No one *ever* need mention "verb," "adverb," or "participle." Exercises depend on the child's ear to judge a sentence's correctness, and they carry the challenge of puzzles and games.

Here is a list of combining cues which O'Hare used in his study. After each cue (in caps) is an explanation and an example. Read them carefully because you will be quizzed! (Again, note that A contains the sentence or sentences to be combined; B contains the combined, final sentence.)

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[8]Available for $2.95 from NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801. See also, Angene, et al., *Sentence Craft* (New York: Ginn & Co., 1975), a handbook for using sentence combining in the classroom.

1. NEG: add "not," "no," "didn't," "doesn't" or "don't" to the sentence.

   A. Mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the noonday sun. (NEG)
   B. Mad dogs and Englishmen don't go out in the noonday sun.

2. NEG-EVER: add "never" to the sentence.

   A. Moby Dick meant to sink the Pequod. (NEG-EVER)
   B. Moby Dick never meant to sink the Pequod.

3. HOW: add a descriptive adverb.

4. WHERE: add an adverb such as "away" or a prepositional phrase.
   HOW and WHERE cues are inserted directly into the given sentence.

   A. The boy shouted HOW into the pipe WHERE.
   B. The boy shouted loudly into the pipe under the road.

In explaining the How and Where cue to children, simply put a frame sentence on the board, such as "The man walked *how*." Then let the children generate lists of words or phrases which fit in the How blank. There is no need to talk about adverbs per se.

5. BY-INV: invert the sentence from active to passive voice.

   A. The cops are chasing the robbers. (BY-INV)
   B. The robbers are being chased by the cops.

   A. The child wrote the story. (BY-INV)
   B. The story was written by the child.

6. THERE-INS: insert "There is" or "There are" at the beginning of the sentence.

   A. A dog is over by the cat.(THERE-INS)
   B. There is a dog over by the cat.

7. WHAT-QUES: change a declarative sentence to a question beginning with "what."

   A. Something happens when flame touches gasoline. (WHAT-QUES)
   B. What happens when flame touches gasoline?

8. WHO-QUES: change a declarative sentence to a question beginning with "who."

   A. The cat was stolen by someone.(WHO-QUES)
   B. Who stole the cat?

   A. Someone stole the cookies from the cookie jar. (WHO-QUES)
   B. Who stole the cookies from the cookie jar?

So far, we have listed cues which call only for simple transformations. As yet, we have combined no sentences. After one more cue, we will be ready to combine.

9. A plus sign (+) goes between two cues if the student must perform two operations in one combination.

   A. A dog is chasing a cat. (THERE-INS + QUES)
   B. Is there a dog chasing a cat?

   A. Some oil wells are in Arabia.(THERE-INS + NEG + QUES)
   B. Aren't there some oil wells in Arabia?

10. SOMETHING: indicates that another phrase will go in the spot marked by SOMETHING.

   A. Celina will learn SOMETHING.
      There are seven wonders of the ancient world. (JUST JOIN)
   B. Celina will learn there are seven wonders of the ancient world.

This cue, SOMETHING, is the signal for a combination. Subsequent cues instruct the student how to do the combining: JUST JOIN, THAT, and THE FACT THAT are three such cues which tell a student what to do when SOMETHING confronts him. After these next explanations and examples, it will be time for a bit of practice.

11. JUST JOIN: indicates that a phrase replaces SOMETHING without words added or removed. See the seven wonders sentence above.

12. THAT: indicates that the word "that" precedes the phrase or sentence to be substituted for SOMETHING.
   A. The school board will realize SOMETHING.
      Holistic assessment is an excellent way to determine teaching goals. (THAT)
   B. The school board will realize that holistic assessment is an excellent way to determine teaching goals.

13. THE FACT THAT: the phrase "the fact that" precedes the phrase or sentence substituted for SOMETHING.

   A. SOMETHING makes us nervous.
      It has not rained. (THE FACT THAT)
   B. The fact that it has not rained makes us nervous.

Remember that SOMETHING indicates the place where the second sentence is to be embedded in the first sentence.

14. IT-THAT: "it" replaces SOMETHING, and "that" precedes the phrase added.

   A. SOMETHING came to pass.
      A babe was born unto a virgin. (IT-THAT)
   B. It came to pass that a babe was born unto a virgin.

With those cues bitten off, ruminate as you look at the following exercise. These seventeen sentences are sample exercises for your review. We provide space in which you can write your B sentence. Appendix II contains sample B sentences for these exercises.

Sentence combining
Exercise 1

1. A. The hot dogs tasted terrible yesterday. (NEG)
   B. _____

2. A. I love to write. (NEG)
   B. _____

3. A. He works for Standard Oil of New Jersey. (NEG)
   B. _____

4. A. She will go to medical school. (NEG-EVER)
   B. _____

5. A. It comes to drink at this water hole at noon. (NEG-EVER)
   B. _____

6. A. The toad HOW leaped WHERE, darted its tongue WHERE and HOW croaked.
   B. _____

7. A. They put pressure on teachers to teach composition. (BY-INV)
   B. _____

8. A. The instructors should have given high grades to the students. (BY-INV)
   B. _____

9. A. Carlos was eating something off the floor. (WHAT-QUES)
   B. _____

10. A. Someone has been eating my porridge. (WHO-QUES)
    B. _____

11. B. A cat is chasing a dog. (THERE-INS)
    B. _____

12. A. Three cats are yowling. (THERE-INS+NEG+QUES)

13. A. Samantha should know SOMETHING.
His title is "Your Grace." (THAT)
B. _____

14. A. Fred should know SOMETHING.
His proper title is "Your Grace." (JUST JOIN)
B. _____

15. A. He should know SOMETHING.
His proper title is "Your Grace." (JUST JOIN)
B. _____

16. A. She should confess SOMETHING
She stole the cookies from the cookie jar. (THAT)
B. _____

17. A. SOMETHING is well known.
She stole the cookies. (IT-THAT)
B. _____

By completing these exercises in set one, the previous cues should make sense. In presenting the cues to children, spend time at the blackboard doing example after example. Then give children a ditto of sentences to combine. Dittoes should begin with a couple of completed examples. Then let children generate on the blackboard their own examples for the class to combine using the day's cue or cues from past study. Later in this section I will suggest yet another way to use children's own writing as the materials for combinations.

The remaining cues, some sample sentences, and two more sets of exercises appear in Appendix II.

These cues must, of course, be introduced to students over a period of several months. Also, not all of the operations are appropriate for young children. However, many are appropriate: if the syntax is present in the child's oral speech, sentence-combining exercises can take the form of oral games for the entire class or a group of students, and the teacher or an older student can act as scribe at the blackboard.

A daily dose of ten minutes or a weekly dose of thirty minutes should do wonders for children afflicted with monotonously simple sentences and needless dependence upon "and." Sentence-combining exercises are best done as part of the rest of language arts instruction. Some sentence-combining practice can be part of all prewriting activities. Let examples come from discussions in which the children are already interested.

A correlary game to these exercises is the group's composition of the longest sentence in the world: begin with a simple sentence such as "She jumped the fence" or "He bought the suit." Ask the children to suggest additions. The teacher or scribe records these additions on the blackboard until no space remains.[9]

Teachers can also use sentence combining to teach paragraphs. After children compose a long sentence, ask them to break it into a few shorter sentences of varying length. Christen these sets of sentences "Paragraphs."

Apart from blackboard work and dittoed exercises, two other important activities utilize sentence combining. The first is to invent sample sentences based on the subject matter of children's curriculum, to capitalize on their enthusiasm for generating exercises, and to find examples for combining in the displayed writing on bulletin boards and walls (see Paradigm Seven). In short, let the children and their work provide the sentences you use in combination drills.

Second, and more important, when reading children's writing before and during conferences with them, watch for sentences they write which are combined sentences; compliment the children on them. Also watch for places in their writing where a combination can occur: show it to the child, put it on the blackboard or on the overhead projector. Connect sentence combining directly to the writing the children do.

Teachers of younger children will enjoy George Green's account, which follows. He uses exercises, similar to sentence-combining, with fourth graders. His frame-sentence approach capitalizes on children's strengths in oral language to help them master the task of writing sentences.

P-GROUPS IN THE FLOWERS ON THE TIE

"Hey, mon, you queer? My ol' mon don't wear no flower neckties," says Juan Garcia before hilarious, high-pitched childish laughter fills the 4th grade room at Gardner Elementary School.

I was a stranger to the class. I had just driven over from San José City College, having taught two classes of remedial English that morning to a much more dejected, much less hilarious group of high-school graduates, none of whom could write much of a sentence after 12 years of school.

My visit to Gardner was at the invitation of a student at City College, one of three teacher aides helping maintain order in this ghetto classroom. She had heard of a very tight system of grammar based on Paul Robert's *English Sentences* that I had invented after 12 years of teaching remedial English at City College, a system that dramatically affected the sentence structure of habitually non-literate students. The idea of trying the method out on 4th graders beginning the process of writing was intriguing.

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9 From "Designing a Language Arts Curriculum," an unpublished inservice presentation by Kent Gill, Emerson Junior High School, Davis (California), 1976.

In fact, for several months before the visit to Gardner, I had been spending two hours a week trying out my strategies on a 4th grade class in the Campbell Union School District. From my experience there I was aware that the explaining and lecturing format that "worked" at City College was impossible to use with small children, that learning is doing, and nothing else would do.

"What's your name, kid?", I asked, and a bright-eyed kid, who turned out to be Porfirio, said "His name is Juan!"

"Juan, *in the park, at home, over the cliff,* are P-groups. You know any more?"

Every kid in the room knew dozens of P-groups. I quickly filled the blackboard with them. Everybody was excited. The room was filled with the boisterous sounds of learning.

Next I put a frame sentence on the board, a basic sentence with a blank: They walked _____the grass. We had dozens of words to fit the frame, and called them all *P's.* Then we changed the blank to the N position, then the D position.

I showed them that P-group follow N's--the cat *in the hat*--and showed them some P-group strings: the cat in the hat in the corner near the table. *Everybody* wanted to *write* some P-groups strings, and *everybody* did. All 40 kids wanted me to see theirs, and I walked from desk to desk inspecting.

The hour was up. We all had fun. As they handed in their work excitedly, five minutes late for recess, Juan yelled, "I'm going to get my old man a flower necktie!" But Porfirio caps him: "It'd be the only one he had!"

The next day I got fourteen nifty letters thanking me for a great time, and asking me to come back.

I couldn't, of course. And I learned from my student, the teacher aide, that that day was the only day of writing they had for that semester. But, of course, it's tough teaching kids to write, especially if English is not their first language. It is possible, though, if you wear a flower tie, and take the time, and have a system.

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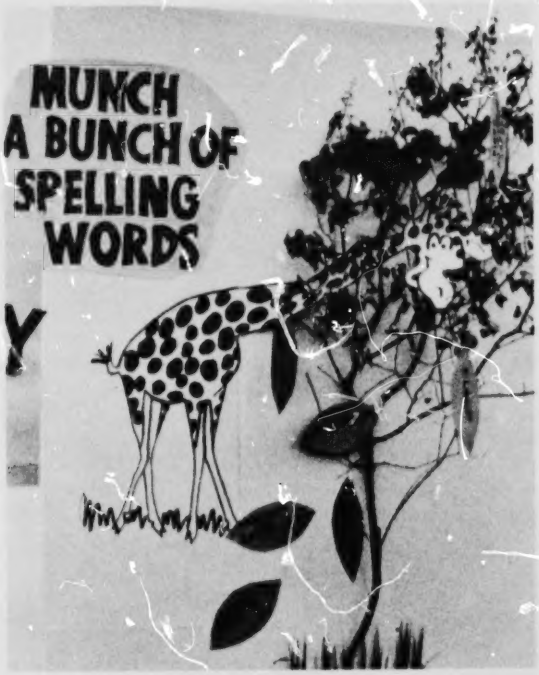
7. DISPLAY WRITING

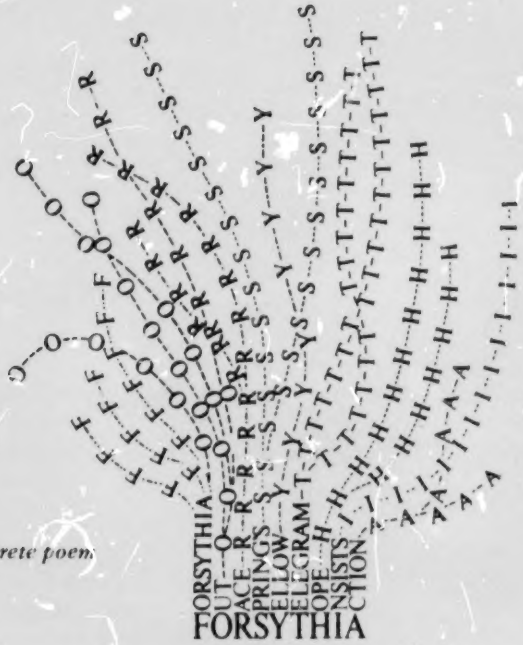
There are two splendid reasons to display children's writing: children need the encouragement of seeing their work on display and the writing provides material for discussion on grammar, mechanics, and spelling.[10]

A bulletin board and blackboard display invite comment . . .

10 This paradigm is my report of an unpublished inservice presentation, *"Juice and Cookies,* by Sarah Dandridge and James Musante, Joaquin Moraga and Los Perales Schools, Moraga (California), 1976.



Display words to teach spelling



Concrete poem

In our own school days, bulletin boards were for the display of perfect papers — usually workbook pages—particularly before Open House night for parents. The papers went unread by other students. Walls, blackboards, and bulletin boards can, however, display other things besides perfection. If the audience for a piece of writing or art is fellow students, that piece should be somewhere easily accessible to them. Classrooms can also provide space for writing activities in process: a gossip board, a graffiti area, a place where the class journal is open to readers and writers, observation books, a class slambook, and other projects which are continuous and require on-going dialogue. These do not need extensive space but do need to be within the eye and reach of students.

Classroom teachers can also provide display racks where a child's writing folder rests; these folders include writing open to others to read. Private writing can stay in desks. Classrooms should also have files containing a folder for each child. Children and teachers need to cultivate a sense of progress: if a child's folder of writing is available for student-teacher conferences, students can then set long-range goals for writing growth and they can see their progress towards them. Ideally, this folder will contain two or three successful pieces of writing from each of the child's school years.

Walls are another important space that can assist teachers to stimulate children's writing: walls can display phrases and sentences written by the children and printed in large letters on strips of paper. These displayed sentences change frequently and usually reflect a theme. Activities which produce these sentences are brief and fun: they are "I can" projects with immediate rewards. Every child's work goes on the wall, and children read each other's sentences.

Certain kinds of writing activities lend themselves to producing displayed work. Of course, any writing which accompanies artwork is natural for display: self portraits made of words and images clipped from magazines and glued in the shape of the child's profile is one project with words and images.

Concrete poems display well. Another activity which leads to displayed writing is "ascribing quotations"—the teacher or students set the class a problem such as, "What do you think George Washington said when he completed his crossing of the Delaware?" or What would Elizabeth I say about Donny Osmond?" The quotations decorate the room and children read each other's attributions with interest.

For the most part, the assignments which display best are those requiring brief writing: headlines, quotations, maxims, tombstone inscriptions, couplets and other short poems, want ads, telegrams, and acronyms (together with the names written out) all display well.

Change wall words frequently, and be sure that they are printed or written in letters large enough for children to read from anywhere in the room.

Use displayed writing to teach grammar and mechanics

Displayed words, phrases, and sentences can be the materials to teach spelling, mechanics, and other conventions. "Find two-syllable words." "Can anyone find a pair of antonyms?" "Any digraphs in sight?" The fact that the posted writing is by the children themselves

gives it intrinsic interest. Locating heretofore mysterious units of grammar in one's own prose should demystify the abstract vocabulary of grammar and mechanics: if one discovers that digraphs runneth over in one's own prose, they cease to be beyond comprehension.

Let children's work and other favorite writing provide the material for the necessary drill on spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and other mechanics which used to be the central content of composition courses.

8. CONNECT READING TO WRITING

How can we utilize the best aspects of reading instruction to enhance writing?

Book contracts can be a strong center to a reading and language arts curriculum. The idea of a book contract, like most good ideas, is simple: teachers provide children with a mimeographed packet of activity pages to go with their reading of a particular book. [11] Here are the contents of a contract on E.G. Speare's *The Witch of Blackbird Pond:*

A cover page, illustrated
A page of general instructions for the contract
A calendar of daily assignments: contracts last from one to three weeks
A page on which the child records her reading: date / time started / page / time stopped / page / work accomplished
A page for recording new vocabulary: word / page / definition
A page for special vocabulary: in this contract, the teacher asks the reader to record all the sailing terminology Speare includes; word/page/definition
A page for recording unusual idioms or expressions to share with others: page / quotation.
A page for summarizing main characters: name / relationship or role / personality description
A series of assignments follows. Each assignment covers a couple of chapters. Most assignments include short-answer questions covering the contents of the book. However, each assignment also includes something creative. Here are some samples:

Assignment 1: Pretend you are sailing from Saybrook to Wethersfield; write one day's entry into your diary. (The contract includes a diary page.)
Assignment 2: Draw portraits of the Woods family based on Speare's descriptions. (The contract includes a page of picture frames.)
Assignment 3: William is always talking about his house. Draw a picture of the outside of your dream house and describe what's inside. (The contract includes a page for the drawing and description.)
Assignment 4: At the beginning of chapter 12, the women dip candles. We can do that, too. Come prepared to do so next time.

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[11] The U.C. Berkeley Education Extension courses of Joan Joy Cheifetz include the writing and use of book contracts. A teacher in one of Mrs. Cheifetz's classes prepared this contract.

Assignment 5: Where is the charter? It disappeared when the candles blew out. Create a short story to explain what became of it. (The contract includes about ten lines for the child to use for writing the story.)
Assignment 6: Draw a picture of Nat in the stocks.
Assignment 7: Research witch hunts during colonial times. What were some of the punishments?
Assignment 8: You are a reporter for the *Weatherfield Times*. Cover the story and write your news report "The Witch Trial of Katherine Tyler." (A news page is in the contract.)
Assignment 9: Write a final page in Kit's diary. What are her thoughts now about the new land?

The contract concludes with vocabulary lists for each chapter. Children are to check themselves: if they do not know a word, they should look it up and record it on the page for new vocabulary.

This contract includes several creative writing assignments and some art assignments. Other contracts include assigning children to design board games for the book, dioramas, a film strip, or a poster, to write a poem or make a treasure map, and to interview others for their reactions to situations that characters face in the book.

To those teachers who do not currently use book contracts, I suggest them; although a good contract takes time to prepare, teachers can quickly build a file of contracts through exchanges with colleagues. To teachers who do use book contracts, I suggest that you examine the kinds of questions in them.

Most questions in book contracts which I have seen are factual questions: the questions simply ask children to report a detail or sequence or main idea which the author directly covers in the story. "What chores was Kit assigned the first days she was with the Woods family?" "What were Kit's reasons for coming to America?" "Why was Kit unfit to go to Meeting?" To answer these questions, a child must read the text with some care, find the answer, and write it down. Two other kinds of questions are important to ask students in all teaching situations, including book contracts: *interpretive* and *applicative*.[12]

To those of us accustomed to asking only factual questions, it takes time, practice, and some self-consciousness to ask interpretive and applicative questions. Here is a passage from an early chapter of *The Witch of Blackbird Pond:*

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[12] For a full discussion on questioning strategies, with many examples, see Robert Ruddell, *Reading-Language Instruction: Innovative Practices* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974), pp. 380-398.

[Kit Tyler, a young woman who has grown up on Barbados, is orphaned and decides to go to colonial Connecticut to live with her mother's only sister. She arrives unannounced at her aunt's Puritan house in a small, muddy, cold, and forbidding settlement. The captain of the boat on which Kit came escorts her through the mud to her aunt's house.]

The captain lifted the iron knocker and let it fall with a thud that echoed in the pit of the girl's stomach. For a moment she could not breathe at all. Then the door opened and a thin, gray-haired woman stood on the threshold. She was quite plainly a servant, and Kit was impatient when the captain removed his hat and spoke with courtesy.

"Do I have the honor of addressing--?"

The woman did not even hear him. Her look had flashed past to the girl who stood just behind, and her face had suddenly gone white. One hand reached to clutch the doorpost.

"Margaret!" The word was no more than a whisper. For a moment the two women stared at each other. Then realization swept over Kit.

"No, Aunt Rachel!" she cried. "Don't look like that! It is Kit! I am Margaret's daughter."

"Kit? You mean--can it possibly be Katherine Tyler? For a moment I thought--oh, my dear child, how wonderful!"

All at once such a warmth and happiness swept over her pale face that Kit too was startled. Yes, this strange woman was indeed Aunt Rachel, and once, a long time ago, she must have been very beautiful.[13]

A factual question about this passage might be, "What did Aunt Rachel look like?" A better question might be "Who did Aunt Rachel think Kit was?" Yet the passage is rich in implication, and interpretive questions seem more appropriate than factual ones: "Why do you think that Kit believes the woman at the door to be a servant?" "Why do you suppose Aunt Rachel calls Kit by her full name, even after Kit says, 'It is Kit!'? And what does that tell you about Aunt Rachel?" "Why does Aunt Rachel think for a moment that Kit is Rachel's sister, Margaret? And why doesn't she know right away that it's Kit?"

Interpretive questions get at a process of thought important to being a good reader and to having interesting things to say in writing: interpretive questions get at a writer's implications, at unstated motivation, at feelings or thoughts which are enacted in the story but not stated outright. Interpretive questions ask students to attend to nuance, to gestures, to tones of voice--to the whole range of communication which is connotative, metaphorical, and subtle. Also, interpretive questions ask students to weigh alternatives; and of course that is one of the reasons students need to wrestle with such questions.

While interpretive questions often have several good answers, applicative questions *always* have several. Applicative questions frequently take the form of "what would you do if you faced the same situation?" Other questions are possible in this mode. The passage from *Blackbird Pond* suggests these applicative questions: "The author writes this scene from Kit's point of view. Can you rewrite it from Aunt Rachel's?" "What other reactions besides warmth and happiness might Aunt Rachel have had? What does her reaction to Kit's arrival tell you about her character? How else might Kit have arrived--should she have let her aunt know she was coming?"

Many applicative questions are questions about values--the values of a character, of the author, and of the student. They can also be questions about feelings: "How might you feel

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[13] New York: Dell, 1958, pp. 30-31.

upon meeting an aunt for the first time?" "How do you feel when you meet people who are no longer youthfully attractive?" And they can be questions of prediction: "What problems and rewards can we predict for Kit based on this short scene? What may happen next?" By showing interest in students' reasons for their answers, a teacher provides an audience and helps students sharpen their logical and emotional perceptions.

Interpretive and applicative questions used in writing situations such as book contracts encourage writing as one process of thought. All too often writing is merely the poor sister of reading. We use writing assignments to quiz students: "In a complete sentence, tell me the color of Washington's white horse?" Asking only factual questions does not utilize the potential writing has to help us think clearly and discover what we think.

At first glance it may seem as if book contracts in general and interpretive and applicative questions in particular are more appropriate for older children. The *Blackbird Pond* contract, for instance, was a difficult one for fourth and fifth graders. However, book contracts also work well with young children; picture books lend themselves to interpretive and applicative questions. With few words and with the play between words and illustrations, a child has many situations to interpret.

For instance, one could ask these questions about *Where the Wild Things Are,* Maurice Sendak's celebrated Caldecotte Medal winner.

> What kind of mischief does Max make?
> Why does his mom send him to bed without eating anything?
> What's a *rumpus*?
> Are the wild things scary? Why or why not?
> Max tames them with a magic trick. What's a magic trick? Do you know any?
> Who loves you most of all?
> When do you get lonesome?
> What do you think Max saw on his trip home?
> Where do you think the wild thing was that he saw in the water on his way to the place where the wild things were?
> What do you think his supper was?
> How could you tell if it was still hot?
> Do you ever have dreams? What kind?

Some of the questions ask the child to "read" the pictures. Others involve more abstract reasoning. Book contracts are possible for primary grade children; utilize them for other skills besides a test of the child's eye for detail and memory for incidents.

Long as this discussion of book contracts is, it by no means covers all the possibilities for writing within a contract framework. For instance, I have said little of the prewriting activities essential to successful use of contracts. If a whole class or group of students do a contract together, the work is usually excellent. I suggest group work at least for the first contract each year: in this way, the teacher and students can model for each other the kind of inquiry, discussion, close reading, and decision-making a good contract demands.

Also, contracts are excellent vehicles for integrating writing into reading. Here are some suggestions. Near the end of a contract, students can write their own conclusion before reading the author's. Or, before students even begin to read a book, the teacher can show them a picture from the book's first pages, and the children can write an imagined opening page or chapter. Of course, contracts which include applicative questions will always let the story give rise to questions directed at the reader: "Frog and toad quarrel. When was the last

time you fought with your best friend? What happened?" Finally, if a story is about a particular character, urge children to write a letter from him or her to some other figure the class is studying in social studies or science or their basal readers.

9. RECORD . . . REPORT . . . GENERALIZE

Record, Report, and Generalize is the final important paradigm which can frame many writing assignments.[14] With older children, it is an ideal framework for moving their writing from specifics to ideas. With younger children — using only the record and report processes — it assists children to organize the discussion and the writing up of events such as nature walks, field trips, science experiments, last summer's activities, seeing a film, or reading a book.

To record is to make a record.

As a prewriting activity after, during, or before discussion, children list thoughts, ideas, events, or whatever is appropriate to the topic. The recording process has no rules; it resembles stream-of-consciousness writing: fragments, phrases, single words — impressions — go down on paper as children think of them. A scribe or secretary writes for group recording sessions, for brainstorming. Memory and association trigger the activity, and both these processes usually work faster than a child can write complete sentences or entire paragraphs. For example, if seventh graders are asked to remember first grade, they might jot down images such as: standing in the corner, wearing saddle oxfords, reading Dick and Jane, playing crack the whip, the kid who ate crayons, Mrs. Ellis (the teacher), math relay games, the bully's switchblade, and so on.

To report is to reconstruct the event out of the record.

To write a report, the children classify entries made during the recording process. Then they pick out important clusters of impressions. The report should take sentence form; the clusters of impressions may well combine to form the sentences. Reports usually deal with only one event remembered, one book read, or one film seen. Of course, the report process can be a group activity.

If we return to our seventh graders remembering first grade, we can exemplify the report process. The children might group their lists into sets of impressions about other children (the crayon eater, the switchblade bully), impressions about themselves (saddle oxfords, standing in the corner), and images of activities (reading, relay, crack the whip). Left-over items might be put aside for now. These sets would each give rise to a paragraph. Topic sentences (if that were on the teacher's agenda) could be generated by the class: "It's the other kids we remember first . . . It's funny the things I remember about myself . . . Our list of activities we remember enjoying is a long one . . . ." And, then each child or the group could complete the report.

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[14] This paradigm and my examples are from two unpublished inservice presentations: "The Importance of Prewriting," James Borrelli, Clayton Valley High School, Concord (California), 1976; and "Raging Hormones: Teaching Junior High Students," Elizabeth White, Stone Valley School, Alamo (California) and Jane Waxenberg, Piedmont Junior High, Piedmont (California), 1976.

To generalize is to give meaning to the event described in the report.

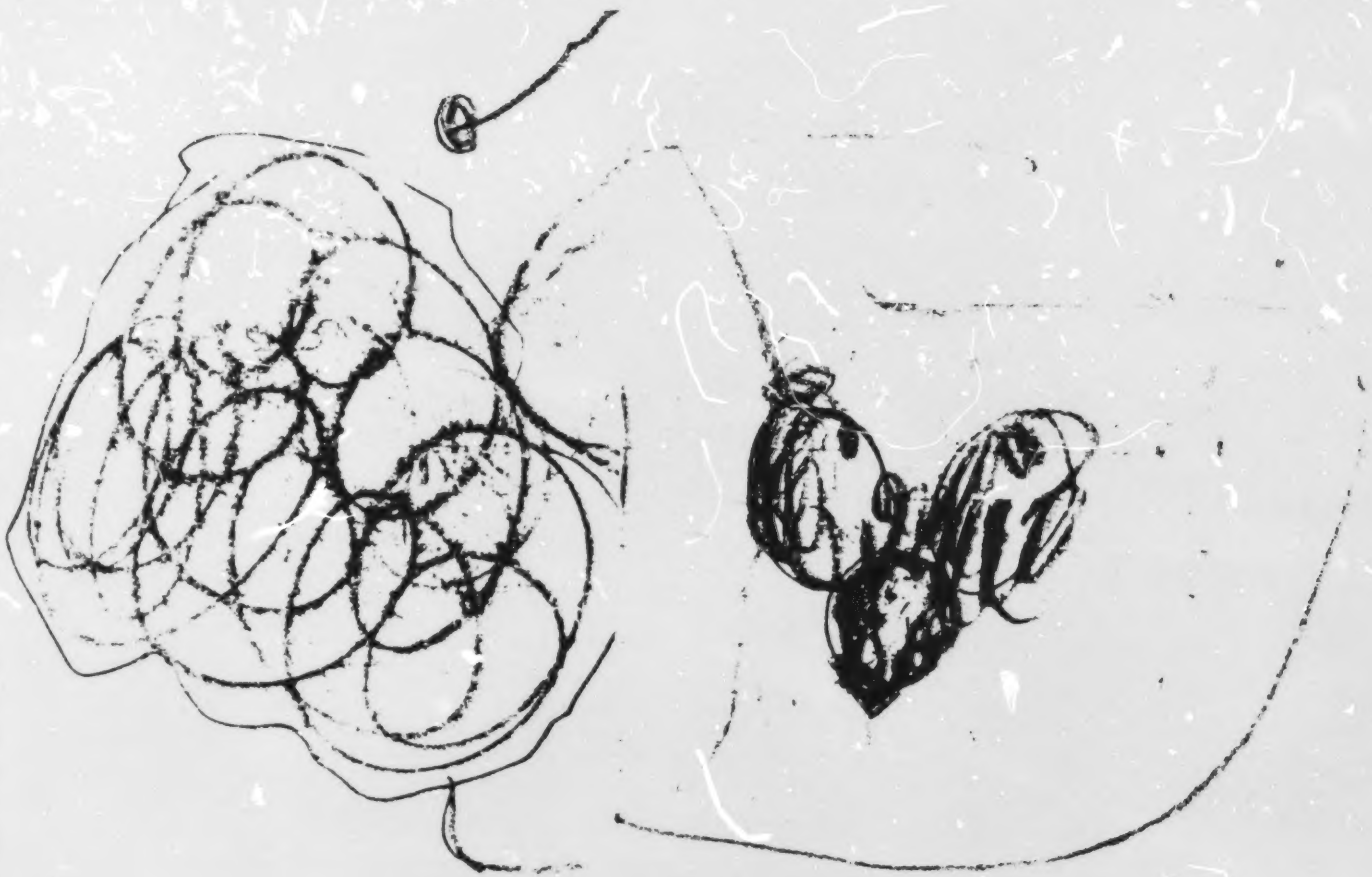
After the record and report processes, the student may be ready to move from the specific to the general, from events to ideas. The record and report processes are crucial preliminaries: few of us, adults included, do very well when we jump directly into writing about ideas. The Record, Report, Generalize paradigm recognizes that ideas are grounded in specifics, and it recognizes that our dramatic sense is the foundation for our best philosophic efforts.

Let us look once more at our seventh graders' *recerche de temps perdu*. The sample topic sentences contain the kernels of generalization: "we remember the other kids first . . ." Why them *first*? A generalization might be that friendship is of great importance to first graders; or, first graders are keen observers of their peers. "It's funny what I remember about myself..." Why is it funny? What do our images of ourselves tell us about how our memory works? A generalization might be that we remember our awkwardness or our failures or our embarrassment rather than our ongoing, daily life. And, finally, "Our list of enjoyable activities is long . . . " What does that tell us? That being six was fun, or that it's important to let six-year-olds have a good time because they will remember it, or . . . .

The generalizations are grounded from the outset in specifics. Certainly this leap from report to generalization is best done first and often with a group of students. Making generalizations out of specifics is a sophisticated act of cognition. It should happen with better results if the generalizations come out of the record and report processes. Record, Report, and Generalize is akin to outline, rough draft, and final draft, but it seems a far better aid to writing: it begins with specifics, with images, with phrases produced by memory and association. It begins, as a step in the writing process, with the kernels of good sentences.

For teachers who teach paragraphs, themes, and expository writing, this paradigm should be most helpful. It provides students with a bridge from personal, narrative writing to writing about ideas: here, the personal perspective informs the report process. Teachers concerned with paragraphs can demonstrate to students that each group of impressions which come out of the record process makes up a unit called the paragraph.

The final chapters highlight the "state of the art." Chapter five summarizes the key findings of James Moffett and James Britton, two educators who have studied the writing of young children. Chapter six presents research findings that can be connected to teaching language in the classroom.



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"These are lots of cells. 1. Cells are in the body. 2. When a group of cells are together, they are called tissue." – Age 7

REVIEWING THE MASTERS

III

5. MOFFETT & BRITTON

This section summarizes the work of James Moffett and James Britton, two leading educators in the English-speaking world who recount to teachers the powerful learning opportunities which composition presents in elementary and secondary schools. James Moffett, author of *A Student-Centered Arts Curriculum, Grades K-13* and *Teaching the Universe of Discourse,* has written for ten years about the ways oral and written expression can be at the center of all learning experiences.[1] His books and curriculum emphasize interactions: discussions precede and follow all writing; simulations and dramatics develop students' sense of voice and audience; all assignments have clear purposes.

James Britton, author of *Talking and Writing* and other books on education, was from 1966 to 1975 the senior researcher for the University of London's Writing Across the Curriculum Project.[2] This project is an extensive study of the kinds of writing British teachers assign their students and the kinds of thought children employ when writing. On the one hand, the project indicts the narrowness of most composition instruction; on the other, it argues that writing can assist children to make discoveries about self and can be part of the thinking process. Together these two eminent educators persuade us that literacy improves most in classrooms where it is put to use.

JAMES MOFFETT

At the center of Moffett's curriculum are his attention to oral language, his attention to sequences of assignments, and his care to motivate students in each writing situation.

The importance of oral language

Moffett attends to oral language in several ways: throughout his book he emphasizes small groups of students working together. The small groups discuss, act out, write, proofread together, and respond to each other's writing with appreciation and suggestions for rewriting. In addition, Moffett discusses at great length the role of talk and drama: in *A Student-Centered Curriculum,* for instance, the first two chapters of the section on teaching K-3 are entitled "Acting Out" and "Speaking Up."

Acting Out begins in primary grades as play with props and as movement to sound. Pantomime starts with a single simple task, proceeds to a series of tasks, and progresses to the miming of a whole story. Pantomime and drama exercises also follow another sequence: the class mimes or acts in concert, then children do solo performance with no audience, then small groups of children do short plays without an audience. The cast exchanges roles and does the play again. Meanwhile, Moffett encourages individual students to do free improvisation, again with no audience. (Audiences too early promote self-consciousness and giggling.)

Acting Out activities for children in grades 4 to 6 build in complexity and subtlety. Children extend pantomime to charades and games of "Who am I" or "What am I?"

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[1] *Student-Centered Curriculum* (Palo Alto: Houghton-Mifflin, 1973); *Universe of Discourse* (Palo Alto: Houghton-Mifflin, 1968).

[2] *Talking and Writing* (London: Metheun, 1967).

Improvisation leads to the enactment of stories that small groups of students compose. Also, reading gives rise to the staging and enactment of playlets based on children's literature.

Speaking Up is even more important to Moffett's approach than acting out: discussion, usually in small groups of three to six children, needs to occur daily in several forms. Moffett recommends heterogeneous groupings of children: "speech develops best when one has to talk to people *unlike* oneself, because overcoming differences requires more clarifying and explaining."[3]

Speaking Up activities emphasize discussions with non-functional topics and discussions which are problem-centered (or task-oriented). Discussions with non-functional topics teach the processes of discussion and give children practice in predication: children enumerate, compare, chronicle, and explain anything they wish to speak about. In these discussions, the teacher models good talking habits. The eventual goal of the process-oriented discussion is monologue; can children talk at show-and-tell, for instance, with an idea of what their audience needs or wants to hear.

Problem-centered and task-oriented discussions have a goal and a scribe to record the results: students discussing a group project decide on a work scope and parcel out responsibilities; or, students work towards resolution as they discuss a burning issue such as bullying by older children, petty theft at school, or rules for handling classroom pets.

Sequences for activities and assignments

Moffett's attention to sequences of language arts experiences is evident even in our preceding summary of acting out and speaking up activities. Moffett carefully orders assignments in the belief that the difficulty a young writer faces with any particular assignment is, possibly, more a matter of what has gone on before than with the assignment itself: a "good" assignment might be "bad" if it comes too soon or out of sequence. Moffett sequences the levels of difficulty in his writing assignments, starting with those which direct a student to look inward and moving toward objective, outward-looking pieces. This approach challenges teachers to see writing and language arts activities as part of a year-long or several-year process. Rather than use writing to check a child's reading comprehension (short answer questions) or to provide creative breaks in the routine of school, teachers can approach writing as a powerful form for thinking; and, as such, teachers should order writing assignments in a progression from personal to public, from concrete to abstract.

One sequence, written by Moffett when he taught at Exeter and printed at University of California at Berkeley's Bay Area Writing Project[4], begins with stream-of-consciousness writing: "Choose somewhere to go and for fifteen minutes write down all of your thoughts, pell-mell, in whatever form they occur to you."[5] A later assignment is to rewrite the first piece "in any way that you think will make it more understandable and interesting to other

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[3] Moffett, *Student-Centered Curriculum*, p. 55.

[4] Request James Moffett's "Writing Assignments (Exeter)," 1972.

[5] *Ibid.* p. 5.

people."[6] In subsequent assignments, the student rewrites the piece to a friend, as a letter, and then to the general public. The sequence next proceeds to writing about remembered events—again, first in stream-of-consciousness format and then to audiences less and less personal.[7] Concluding assignments focus on expository writing—on generalizing, theory, and argument.

Moffett on motivation

Moffett pays attention to the purposes of assignments, the goals of discussion, the audiences for writing, and the importance of group work in his classroom. Students know the reasons why they do things. A second part of Moffett's emphasis on motivation is his attention to student-generated projects: students write stories which peers read; journals and personal writing become the basis for other, more formal pieces of writing. This approach is generally called "Language Experience"; others, such as Roach Van Allen and Bill Martin, have developed it into published curricula (as has Moffett himself in the Houghton-Mifflin "Interactions" materials). Moffett also appreciates the motivating power of fun and games. He describes games for teaching logic, punctuation, complete sentences, and other basic thinking and composing skills.

"Motivation" means that activities and assignments must be purposeful and enjoyable for students, grounded in personal expression, and presented or written for special audiences. Lastly, Moffett's appreciation for motivation promotes his respect for student activity, student speech, and student achievement—a respect which runs through all of his work. In turn, Moffett models the teacher as a trusted adult—an audience who can give strong motivation to students.

JAMES BRITTON

James Britton's work bears many resemblances to Moffett's. In an address to the National Conference of Teachers of English, Britton summarizes his philosophy: "What matters about writing is that children should write about what matters to them to someone who matters to them." Here, Britton expresses two concerns also critical to Moffett: first, that children write about their own experiences, and second, that children have a specific audience clearly in mind as they write.

Britton gives detailed attention to the question of *audience*. That, together with his schematic approach to three kinds of *voice* and his constant attempts to answer the question "Why write?" are the three aspects of his work which I will summarize here.[8]

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[6] *Ibid.* p. 11.

[7] See pp. 98-99 in our Chapter Four (record, report and generalize).

[8] Britton's co-researchers in the Writing Across the Curriculum Project include Nancy Martin, Peter Medway, Harold Smith, Pat D'Arcy, and Brian Newton. The views ascribed here to Britton are, in truth, those of the Curriculum Project. The Curriculum Project is also called the Schools Council Project.

Audiences for the young writer

Britton and his co-researchers list six audiences:

Student to self (journal, first drafts)
Student to trusted adult, including a teacher
Student to teacher as partner in dialogue (writing as part of an educational process; exchange of information, opinions, references, etc.)
Student to teacher as examiner (the red pen)
Student to peers
Writer to public audience[9]

Britton found that in English junior high and secondary schools, about half of all writing is for the "examiner" audience: here writing is a means of testing; writing happens *after* learning rather than as part of the learning process. Britton urges teachers to be an examining audience less frequently and to be a trusted adult and a partner in dialogue more frequently; in doing so, teachers can assist children to view writing as something useful in learning.

The voice and functions of writing

In addition to this attention to audience, Britton details at great length a schema for classifying the voice of student writing. He describes a spectrum with expressive writing at the center moving slowly outward to poetic writing and to transactional writing.[10]

Transactional	*EXPRESSIVE*	*Poetic*
A hierarchy is not suggested; the teacher may move students from expressive to either poetic or transactional and may include all three types of writing. However, this outward movement is a slow one, over years of schooling. In the elementary grades, Britton argues, the bulk of student writing should be in the expressive voice.		

Definitions are in order: *expressive writing* is at the center of this continuum of transactional, expressive, and poetic writing. Its definition may be a bit slippery, but because it contains a great deal of what Britton says to teachers, we must grip it firmly.

Expressive writing is like speech. It is close to the self. To understand it fully one must know the context *and* the speaker. It assumes that the audience is interested in the speaker as well as the topic. Its function is to talk with rather than to talk at.[11] Britton draws three personal and philosophical conclusions: expressive language is our means of coming

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9 Nancy Martin, et al., *Why Write?* (London: Schools Council Project, 1973) p. 4.

10 See *Why Write?* and *Keeping Options Open* (London: Schools Council Project, 1973).

11 In summarizing Britton's definition of expressive writing, I rely on the text of Britton's address to NCTE, "Writing to Learn and Learning to Write." Virginia Reid was kind enough to provide a copy of the speech.

together with others; it is the language in which we first draft most of our important ideas; and therefore, it is the form of language by which we most strongly influence the people closest to us.

Expressive writing resembles written down speech. The writer stays in the writing and doesn't disappear. Britton urges teachers to allow children to stay in this mode for much of their writing, even through secondary school. In order to encourage such writing, a teacher must respond to it, just as a listener does to expressive speech, with interest in both the speaker and the topic.

Here, for instance, is a piece of expressive writing—composed by a 15 year old:

> School ugh, Dad's up having a wash, Mum's gone to work, sister's got up and me I don't get up until I'm told to. If I had my way I wouldn't get up. Still I get up, have a wash and go to school. On the way you see some funny people about these days. Take that old man who lives around the corner. He says that he cannot go out to get his pension (that's the old age pension, one has to go to the labor office to get it) and when someone gets it for him, he runs to the pub like a shot. Crafty old man. At any rate to get back to walking to school. School. What a terrible word...

And here, from his address to NCTE, is Britton's account of its expressive qualities:

> A good deal of that comes out of speech, it's fairly near to speech. He rather assumes that we're in his context. He invites us to accept this assumption that we know the sort of things he's talking about, so he says: "Take that old man who lives down the corner." "Take that old man." Well, what old man? We've had nothing leading up to him. He's come straight out of the boy's context; he's offering it to us to accept and assume the context, which is again like speech. The whole piece is expressive. This chap isn't trying to inform us, he's simply sharing a slice of his experience with us. Letting us into it is an expressive function; it's a way of being with him.

Expressive writing is at the core of Britton's ideal writing curriculum. We already have half of the reason why: because expressive writing is one person communicating with another. The other half is that Britton sees expressive writing as the best foundation for developing the two other forms of writing which are the ultimate goals of teachers of language arts: transactional writing and poetic writing.

Transactional writing transmits information or it persuades. It is writing which should be logical and factual. It is the language of science, of technology, of trade, and of reporting, instructing, informing, advising, persuading, arguing and theorizing. As a writer moves from the expressive to the transactional, he or she moves closer to meeting the demands of the reader: the writer makes more explicit all references to the outside world and omits irrevelant personal features. The *writer* fills in the context, not the reader.

On the other side, poetic writing uses language to create a verbal object; it is an end in itself and it need not be limited to reality or utility.[12] The stress is on the forms of language and of events. In moving from the expressive to the poetic, the writer must create a piece which is complete in itself, which demands of the reader no special knowledge of the writer or his context. In poetic writing the piece has the quality of *something made.*

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[12] Martin, *Why Write?*, p. 13.

One note about Britton's implied position on "creative writing" is in order. Britton and his co-researchers in the Schools Council Project have little to say about poetic writing in British schools. And, of course, Britton, et al., value writing in the expressive voice rather than the poetic or transactional. This preference for expressive writing, particularly for young writers, may be a caution to U.S. teachers who place more emphasis on "creative writing" than do the British. We may in our creative and pretend topics push children too quickly away from expressive language, just as our British colleagues do with their early insistence upon transactional writing.

However, one practice of some American elementary school teachers seems full of potential. This is the introduction of a poetic stance or perspective into transactional situations: "Pretend you are Shakespeare thrust into downtown San Francisco. What personal and cultural attributes do you have for coping with cars, electronics, skyscrapers, and all the other trappings of twentieth-century life?" or, "Imagine that you are a citizen of Pompeii the day Vesuvius erupts. What will you do? Recount your last minutes." These assignments encourage a student to adopt a point of view that will be fun—and therefore interesting and motivating—and at the same time the student must use knowledge of the topic to be historically or scientifically correct in all details. [13]

We American teachers might well extend our use of this poetic/transactional approach, yet we should notice that it removes students from expressive writing: the student, who is out of the context of personal experience, must be both transactional (in providing accurate information) and poetic (in casting that information in an active mode). Certainly I encourage teachers to use this approach in some writing situations, yet to allow many opportunities for expressive writing as well.

Why write?

Britton's answers to the question "Why Write?" are answers which return us to his overriding recommendation that teachers encourage children to write in the expressive voice. In Schools Council Project publications, Britton and his co-workers mention several reasons for students to write. Here are some they include:

— Because talk is evanescent and limited to one's short-term memory, writing is appropriate for situations which call for a record. A writer can at any point stop to get his bearings and to see where he has come from.

—When talking, sometimes it is difficult to find the right words. Writing provides leisure to search for the best way to say what one means. Writing extends our power to find the right words.

—Because no audience is immediately present, writing can also give a person opportunities to explore thought, to try out ideas, or to record what is private. This aspect of writing is particularly important if the intended audience is one's self or a trusted adult.

—Writing also gives us the chance to explore situations from another's point of view or to try alternative stances for ourselves. Writing offers us infinite chances to be spectators in endless lives and endless situations.

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13 From "The Last Ditto Exchange," an unpublished inservice presentation by Sarah Dandridge, delivered in February, 1977, at Holy Names College.

—Writing, above all, offers artistic possibilities. Our culture tends to limit spoken poetic language to story telling. Most other forms for poetic expression depend on writing.14

—Writing promotes a variety of thought processes—informative, reflective, perceptive, appreciative, imaginative and assimilative. Britton explores in some detail the relationship between writing and thought and establishes that expressive writing is the key to other types of writing.

Writing and thought

Expressive writing can embody any of the thought processes Britton enumerates in answering "Why write?" For instance, expressive writing can record information and it can provide a reader with directions how to; but the directions may well include autobiographical commentary and be spoken in a personal voice, as in this piece of writing by an eleven year old:

> It is quite easy to make oxygen if you have the right equipment necessary. You'll need probably a test tube (a large one), a stand with some acid in it. You'll need a Bunsten burner, of course, you must not forget a glass tank too. A thin test tube should fit neatly in its place. When you've done that, fill the glass tank and put the curved end upwards. Put the glass tank on the table and fill with water. Very soon you will find you've made oxygen and glad of it.15

Reflective, perceptive, appreciative, imaginative and assimilative writing might also be "glad of it" in an expressive way. Britton contends that children will write little good prose unless they are allowed to be "glad of it" whenever their speaking voice interjects.

Here is a part of one day's entry from a 12 year old's journal; expressive writing helps a child reflect and assimilate:

> Young boys like to talk to old people. They have so much to say about themselves, about when they were little children. I went up to a man. I asked him if he liked London. He said he loved London. He had lived in London all his life. He was ninety years old. He looked a bit upset, I don't know what about. I asked him if it was hard to get a job when he had left school. He said that when he left school they would do just odd jobs, go around asking if they wanted any help with their shopping or doing shopping for them. They could find lots of things to do, but they would not get a lot. When they got a little bit older it was very hard. Everywhere he went he could not get a job, he said. Life was hard then and lots of things have changed.16

Britton argues that it is only after years of expressive writing, of expressive writing received by a trusted adult, that a student has sufficient control of written language to attempt transactional or poetic writing. The pay-off for the patient teacher who receives

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14 The observations contrasting talk and writing come from Peter Medway, *From Talking to Writing* (London: Schools Council Project, 1973), pp. 4-7.

15 Quoted in Britton's address to NCTE.

16 Medway, *From Talking to Writing*, p. 26.

expressive piece after expressive piece, who reads a child's writing as a form of conversation with the child, the pay-off for this patient teacher is students who use writing as a vehicle for thought and who turn to writing for all the reasons they have come to enjoy it.[17]

The work of James Moffett and James Britton deserves the special attention of teachers. So too, does the work of a few other researchers in composition. In the next chapter I summarize the work of Frances Christensen, Josephine Miles, Walker Gibson, and Kenneth Macrorie, and draw some implications from those summaries.

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17 The books of James Moffett and James Britton are in bookstores and libraries. The pamphlets by Britton and his co-researchers at the University of London are available for about 60c each from: Project Secretary, Writing Across the Curriculum, Institute for Education, 36 Bedford Way, London WC1 HODB, U.K.

The pamphlets are synthesized into two publications which may be easier to obtain than the pamphlets. The first is:

James N. Britton, et al., *The Development of Writing Abilities, 11-18.* (London: Macmillan, 1975). The other is:

Nancy Martin et al., *Writing and Learning Across the Curriculum* (London: Schools Council Publications, 1976).

6. RESEARCH

In recent years, scholars working in a variety of related fields—rhetoric, logic, literary criticism, stylistics, linguistics—have gained insights that can directly influence the classroom teaching of writing. Rather than merely cite the mass of such scholarship, I will examine a sampling of such studies that illustrate how scholarship can have a profound impact upon the teaching of writing in the schools.[1]

FRANCIS CHRISTENSEN

In 1963 Professor Francis Christensen[2] of the University of Southern California delivered a paper, "The Generative Rhetoric of the Sentence," at the Asilomar Language Arts Conference. In this paper Christensen illustrated the syntactic properties of modern prose style.

Christensen came to his major work almost by accident. He had been asked to write a college rhetoric for a publisher. He started this task by examining the texts already in print, examining, as it were, his competition. This seemed a natural thing to do, but it proved far more important than he realized, for he discovered that all of the texts said the same things about writing: that sentences are simple, compound, or complex, or, from another point of view, loose, balanced, or periodic; that paragraphs have topic sentences that can appear either at the beginning, the middle or the end; that paragraphs can be "developed" in any number of ways through illustration and example, through definition, etc.; that certain constructions such as the absolute are to be shunned. He also discovered in examining older texts that these books had always said the same things, no matter when they had been written.

This disturbed him; more disturbing was that these texts did not describe the writing he read every day in magazines, in novels, in stories, or in works of non-fiction. He noticed then—and this was a profound discovery because it had not been noticed before—that the writers wrote one way while the textbooks taught another. So he stopped looking at past texts and began looking at writing instead. His study lasted over ten years. In that time he isolated the characteristics of modern syntax that he discovered in major American and British authors. In the Sixties he began publishing a series of journal articles about his findings. He dicovered that sentences were, for the most part, loose, relying heavily upon the free sentence modifiers (verb, noun, adjective clusters; prepositional phrases; absolutes) and that these sentence modifiers were added or attached to the basic sentence clause, ***not a part of it***. The presence of these additions, then, focused his attention upon the overpowering importance of the modifiers in determining sentence sense, as, for example, in this short excerpt from Hemingway's "The Undefeated": (The base clauses are italicized; all else is modification.)

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1 This section is based extensively upon an article by James R. Gray and Miles Myers, "The State of Knowledge About Written Composition," 1975, included in a report to the Carnegie Corporation, pages 63ff, and available from the Bay Area Writing Project, School of Education, University of California at Berkeley.

2 The key work for this discussion is *Notes Toward a New Rhetoric* (New York: Harper Row, 1965).

> *He came straight*, his eyes on the man. *Fuentes stood still*, leaning back, the banderillos pointing forward. As the bull lowered his head to hook, *Fuentes leaned backward*, his arms came together and rose, his two hands touching, the banderillos two descending red lines, *and leaning forward drove the points into the bull's shoulder*, leaning far in over the bull's horns and pivoting on the two upright sticks, his legs tight together, his body curving to one side to let the bull pass.

He discovered more about both sentences and paragraphs: that sentence variety, in the sense described in the texts, just doesn't exist; that most sentences—well over 80%—begin with the subject; that there is a basic and common subordinate/coordinate structure to both sentences and paragraphs; that texture is what writers vary—not syntax; that paragraphs are developed sentence by sentence and thus a variety of methods can be employed within the same paragraph sequence.

These discoveries of Christensen have obvious significance for the teacher of writing. Here is one successful way of presenting this material to junior high students:

—Isolate characteristics of modern prose style and model them to students in extensive sentence examples taken from actual professional writing.

—Ask students to imitate in sentences of their own the various characteristics of modern prose style.

—Ask students to examine prose style in longer passages and longer structures and to imitate these longer sequences as they once did with sentence models.

This approach has consistently resulted in student writing that is both mature and professional. The methodology is both simple and transferable. For a description from a teacher applying Christensen's approach, see Robert Miller's report in Appendix III.

With younger children, one can use both modelling and sentence-combining exercises to increase children's intuitive understanding of sentence structure. Both modelling and sentence combining are described earlier in this manual, in the fourth chapter, pp. 83-90.

JOSEPHINE MILES

Professor Josephine Miles's study of language has had two centers of focus: the history of style from the beginnings of modern English prose to the present and the uses of reason in the predication and development of ideas. [3]

Miles on English prose style

At any given period in the history of English prose it is possible to identify three distinctive prose styles, each with its own characteristics: the predicative, with simple subject-predicate combinations followed by varying numbers of phrases and clauses; the adjectival, at the other extreme from the predicative, with high density clauses, few verbs, and little material which directly predicates the subject; the balanced or classical, best explained as a middle ground between the other two.

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[3] Two of Miles's many publications concern us here: *Style & Proportion: The Language of Prose and Poetry* (New York: Little, Brown & Co., 1967), and "Essay in Reason," *Educational Leader*, 19, no. 5 (February 1962), pp. 311-313.

TABLE 7

Emerson's is a *predicated style*, as in the opening of *Self-Reliance:*

Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the divine Providence has found for you; the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age, betraying their perception that the Eternal was stirring at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being. And we are now men, and must accept in the highest mind the same transcendent destiny; and not pinched in a corner, not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but redeemers and benefactors, pious aspirants to be noble clay plastic under the Almighty effort, let us advance and advance on Chaos and the Dark.

Contrast the beginning of Whitman's *Democratic Vistas*, with its three *adjectives* for every verb:

As the greatest lessons of Nature through the universe are perhaps the lessons of variety and freedom, the same present the greatest lessons also in New World politics and progress. If a man were ask'd, for instance, the distinctive points contrasting modern European, and American political and other life with the old Asiastic cultus, as lingering-bequeath'd yet in China and Turkey, he might find the amount of them in John Stuart Mill's profound essay on Liberty in the future, where he demands two main constituents, or sub-strata, for a truly grand nationality—1st, a large variety of character—and 2nd, full play for human nature to expand itself in numberless and even conflicting directions—(seems to be for general humanity much like the influences that make up, in their limitless field, that perennial health-action of the air we call the weather—an infinite number of currents and forces, and contributions, and temperatures, and cross purposes, whose ceaseless play of counterpart brings constant restoration and vitality). With this thought—and not for itself alone, but all it necessitates, and draws after it—let me begin my speculations.

Compare Twain's *balanced, classical style* in this passage from *Life on the Mississippi:*

Imagine the benefits of so admirable a system in a piece of river twelve or thirteen hundred miles long, whose channel was shifting every day! The pilot who had formerly been obliged to put up with seeing a shoal place once or possibly twice a month, had a hundred sharp eyes to watch it for him now, and bushels of intelligent brains to tell him how to run it. His information about it was seldom twenty-four hours old. If the reports in the last box chanced to leave any misgivings on his mind concerning a treacherous crossing, he had his remedy; he blew his steam whistle in a peculiar way as soon as he saw a boat approaching; the signal was answered in a peculiar way if that boat's pilots were association men; and then the two steamers ranged alongside and all uncertainties were swept away by fresh information furnished to the inquirer by word of mouth and in minute detail.

(The Emerson quotation is from the Everyman Library edition, 1938, p. 31; the Whitman passage is from the Pellegrini & Cudsky printing, New York, 1948, p. 208; the Twain passage is from the Bantam edition, 1945, p. 121.)

In Table 7 are samples of each of the three styles Miles describes. She discusses each of these samples in *Style and Proportion*, pages 64-65. In the Renaissance, for example, we can see the predicative style in the works of Thomas More and Ben Jonson, the adjectival in the works of Roger Ascham and Thomas Browne, and the balanced in the works of Francis Bacon and John Milton. Furthermore, Professor Miles points out that at any given period in the past and in the present, not only are all three styles a constant in their appearance in the works of various authors, but that each period has its dominant style. She points to the predicative style as dominant in the 20th century: it is the colloquial style of Hemmingway, Lawrence, and Joyce. Francis Christensen labeled this style "cumulative," his term for the style he too saw as dominant. That both scholars point to the same qualities in modern prose style is significant, but Miles's work goes a step further. Christensen's characterizing of the dominant prose style of our day is a masterpiece of scholarship, but he seems to deny all writing that does not fall within his definition of "cumulative." It is for Josephine Miles to point out that the adjectival and the balanced are still very much in evidence in the works of many modern writers. (Twain writes balanced prose, Whitman writes in a verbal style.) Hers is a broader view than Christensen's.

Here are some implications for teachers of Miles's work on prose style. There is a dominant prose style in 20th century writing, predicative or cumulative, call it what you will. It has characteristics students can see, study, model and experiment with in writing: *a syntax characterized by a main clause plus additions,* as in the sentences by Hemingway and Emerson previously quoted. But the adjectival and the balanced styles have identifiable characteristics also, and they too should be studied. With this broader view every characteristic of modern syntax can be presented to student writers. This approach weds the study of language with the study of composition, and this is an area of research that has been sorely neglected. It trains young writers to be consciously aware of the potential of the English sentence, of what they can do when they set pen to paper; it is an approach that teaches students how to write; it does not take for granted that they already can do so.

In striking contrast to the myriad rules of textbooks, the work both of Miles and Christensen consistently calls attention to the way the mind underpins the flow of discourse, how it generates and controls the patterns of language.

Miles on the uses of reason

Textbooks frequently have great lists of one-thousand-and-one writing topics tucked away somewhere in the back pages: Birds of Prey, My Favorite Movie, The Great Outdoors, A Dangerous Moment, etc. Students are expected to be able to take these subjects and make something of them in a composition. Such an idea is nothing less than nonsense, but it is for Josephine Miles to tell us why.

It is not subjects that students develop when they write, it is rather what they say about a subject. The subject, standing by itself, lacks direction. When we add a predicate to the subject, we give it the shape of an idea; we give it direction. Simply put, a subject plus a predicate equals an idea. The student who couldn't write about New York in one of Josephine Miles's classes because, she said, "It's too big, I'll write about Berkeley instead" still has this lesson to learn. The predicate controls the subject: no subject is too small or too large to write about, for it is what you say *about* the subject that will be developed.

Once determined, the idea can be developed in a series of related sentences and paragraphs. It is here that Josephine Miles reminds us, in several essays written over the past twenty-five years, that ideas connect in a limited number of ways. The relationship can be conjunctive: ***and-and; then-then-then; also; moreover.*** It can be disjunctive, insisting on mutally exclusive alternatives: ***either-or; on the one hand-on the other hand; not this, but that.*** It can be concessive, assuming yet denying: ***though—yet; nevertheless; however;*** and finally, relationships of ideas can be organized conditionally: ***if-then; because-therefore.***

Several implications follow this study of predication. First, we learn what not to do: avoid assignments simply titled "My Summer Vacation," "My Home Town," "My Favorite Object." These titles imply no predication. It follows, then, that teachers should give assignments which suggest or include those magic, predicating words such as "however," and "because."

One can borrow illustrations from the teaching of Bonnie Hubbard, from the Cupertino district near San José, California. In her assignments she combines predication with controversy: "Motorcycles should be banned because . . . " The "because" demands that students think, give reasons and support arguments. "Motorcycles should be banned" generates the interest that comes with controversy; it's a topic right from the fantasy life of twelve-year olds.

Miles's work reminds teachers of younger children to give direction to assignments: in a prewriting discussion, the topic "older brothers and sisters" could generate a list of "shoulds." Children could then pick one of the "shoulds," add a "because" and start to compose. During a group discussion, even "My Summer Vacation" could generate entries under the headings "Disasters," "Best Times," "Wanted To But Couldn't," "Had To," "Alone," "With Friends," "With Family," "Food," "Recreation." These entries, already grouped, give rise to conjunctive development ("and-and" or "then-then-then") or to disjunctive composition ("on the one hand—on the other hand" or "I wish . . . but I did"). Other ways of utilizing predication in assignments are discussed in Chapter 4, Theme days and contests, pages 74-75.

WALKER GIBSON

Walker Gibson, in *Tough, Sweet, and Stuffy,* and *Persona,* emphasizes the writer's *voice* and its relation to a wide range of audiences.[4] This is not to imply that Gibson overlooks syntax and meaning; on the contrary, he gives great attention to choices in diction, phrases and sentence patterns as he reveals how these create connotations and tones that produce a particular voice for a reader. This description characterizes, if over-simplifies, his approach: he takes the notion of persona, or speaker, which is central to New Criticism and its attendant teaching strategies for literature, and turns it around to face the problems of teaching composition. Whereas the teacher's opening question about a poem (especially in the 1950's and 1960's) might be, "Who is the speaker?" Gibson would have writers start with the question, "Who is it that I am or imagine I am in this situation?" Concentrating, then, on the voice of the writer and the self it conveys to an audience, Gibson considers

[4] *Tough, Sweet, and Stuffy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966) and *Persona* (New York: Random House, 1968).

choices in word, phrase, clause, and sentence because it is these choices that tend to reveal the speaker in a given writing situation. Gibson's work in the elusive tonal zones of voice complements Josephine Miles's stress on predication and its logical imperative: both rhetoricians move from the inward dimension of composing outward to its implications in the choice and development of language.

Gibson's work has at least three implications for teachers. While James Moffett and James Britton direct teachers to vary the audiences for whom children write, and Josephine Miles stresses logic and predication, Walker Gibson attends to voice. Teachers must see to it that children write in several voices: if they write a story from one point of view, urge them to rewrite it from another point of view. For instance, a third-grader's story on the pilgrims could be rewritten from the point of view of a child, or from the point of view of a turkey.

Certainly such an approach suggests role playing and simulation as prewriting activities to encourage children to try out voices. Tape recorders take down some of those voices; the children can transcribe the recordings and even use print style to convey tones of voice: "BRING ME MY BONE" looks as well as sounds different from "may i have my bone back please."[5] Children can quickly learn to portray speech graphically.

KENNETH MACRORIE

After suffering over generations of sterile student prose, Kenneth Macrorie discovered, late in his teaching career, that students have a surer sense of tone and voice and a fresher and more spontaneous flow to their writing when allowed to write freely in response to their own ideas, feelings, and personal experiences. In his hands this approach is developed into a complete composition program.[6]

Macrorie's method is a natural for beginning writers, for poor writers, and, at any level, for students who freeze when facing a blank sheet of paper, or for students who have been blocked by a too heavy-handed red pencil. His approach teaches students that writing is a process involving many drafts and revisions, that the final copy always can be improved. He works in this way: he might ask a class to write freely on any topic for a short period of time daily for a week. After they write five or six pieces, he asks the students either to revise one piece or work up a composite version from the best moments of the earlier writings. This piece is brought into class and ***read aloud*** to a constant group of students (students begin in this way to write for a known audience and not just for the instructor). After the paper has been read aloud the writer comments first, and obvious yet original idea! The student comments on how he or she thinks the paper succeeded, and, even more importantly, points out any sections that need revision. As students read aloud they almost constantly come across phrases, particular words, or whole sentences that strike them as "not right"; in fact, frequently teachers hear students editing and rewriting aloud. The student then revises the

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[5] Bill Martin's readers, for example, use print to suggest different voices. *Sounds of Language* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970-74).

[6] See especially *Uptaught* (New York: Hayden, 1970), *Writing to be Read* (New York: Hayden, 1971), and *Telling Writing* (New York: Hayden, 1973).

paper once more and hands it in. By this time, the students have written six, seven, even eight drafts before the instructor sees what they have done. When Macrorie does get the papers, he reads them at the typewriter and types sections he likes onto a ditto. In class he discusses at some length what it was he liked about each item on the ditto.

From Moffett and Britton and from the four writers discussed in this chapter the reader can see again that improved teaching of writing will come from other directions besides lists of exciting topics.

I hope that *Teaching Writing K-8* has established the importance of writing in the elementary schools and given teachers the tools to craft a solid writing curriculum. What is presented should alert teachers to the possibilities of writing for themselves and for their students--possibilities beyond both creative writing and exposition.

And here's my final paragraph. Rather than a generalization, I'll close with an anecdote. In every stack of papers written by primary students, a few have the briefest of sentences at the top followed by an elaborately decorated "THE END." Some of these are six inches high, worthy of a medieval monk illuminating a page of the Song of Solomon. The task of writing — difficult, exasperating — is done, Alleluia. Let us join now those suffering first graders turned jubilant at THE END.

APPENDIX I

Sample topics and essays from the National Assesment of Educational Progress, Assessment of Writing.

During 1969-70, the National Assessment staff collected thousands of essays, from across the country, written by nine-year olds, thirteen-year olds, seventeen-year olds, and adults. Using that sampling, National Assessment has issued several reports on writing skills.

Here, from Report Ten,[1] are two sets of examples. First is the topic for nine-year olds, plus three sample responses. Second is the topic for thirteen-year olds, plus three sample responses. The first response in each set is from the eighty-fifth centile — these are good essays. The second sample in each set is from the fiftieth centile — an average essay. The third in each set is from the fifteenth centile — a weak essay.

These samples are reprinted from computer printouts; the spelling is the students' but the capitalization is my own. All punctuation is the students' except for periods after abbreviations.

SAMPLE NINE-YEAR OLD WRITING

In a richly detailed photograph, the nine-year olds see a rapid stream (with low cascades). In the stream two deer swim — one has antlers, the other does not. Also in the picture are many trees, some are on fire. The sky is clouded with smoke. The picture is in color.

Here are the instructions:
Here is a picture of something sad that is going on in the forest. Look at the picture for a while. Do you see the forest fire? Write a story about what is happening in the picture. This is an important story because you want people to know about this sad event.

The rest of the page provides lines for student responses. Students are instructed to use the back of the page if they wish.

—Someone must have thrown a match down or something because, a big fire started and all the animals are triying to get away the only way to get away is to get across the river the deer are swimming across the river the racoon is going to triy to get across, the water is moving very rapidly, they mite not mack it so hop they make it acoss, hop they can do it, some trees are falling hop no trees fall on the animals, all those buatiful tree, now it will take years to grow trees like those.

—a girl from the West (#1530)

—One day in the woods thier was a fire all the animals were friaghten all of them started running two dear were running so fast they fell in the lake they got cold and friaghten but they started to swim and got to the other side.

—a girl from the West (#1136)

—Once there was a man that was carless and look what he did. The forest will be burnd dowm and the anials will be killed. Lucky two deer are swimming across the stream and are saved to bad.

—a boy from the Midwest (#401)

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[1] *Selected Essays and Letters: A Selection of Papers Collected During the 1969-70 Assessment of Writing* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, Nov., 1972).

SAMPLE THIRTEEN-YEAR OLD WRITING

Thirteen-year olds got this assignment:

Most of us look up to some famous person as a representative of the things we believe in or as the kind of person we would like to be. This person may come from any part of our society. For instance, we might admire Winston Churchill or Martin Luther King, Jr., Walter Schirra or Mickey Mantle, Florence Nightingale or Barbra Streisand. No matter where this person comes from or what kind of work he or she does, however, we can recognize such traits of greatness as determination, physical courage, the ability to inspire others, and faithfulness to some worthy cause.

Think about a famous person whom you admire. Select a particularly admirable characteristic or quality of that person—such as Mickey Mantle's courage in the face of crippling physical handicaps or Florence Nightingale's determination to fight against strong governmental pressure.

Write an essay of about 200-250 words describing this characteristic or quality. Be sure to provide an illustration of it from the person's life. Try to show that the person is great at least partly because of this characteristic or quality.

(The rest of the page provided lines for the response. Students could use the back of the page if they wished.)

—I really admire Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He was a very kind and gentle man. He tried to fight for his freedom and what was right. He was a non-volient person. When he won the Noble Peace Prize he gave it all to the poor people champain. I would have like to have been that person for what he was and for what he did and thought. I was sad when I heard that he was dead. He might be dead but his spirit still linger on. I remeber when my sister wrote to Mrs. King. It was a poem she made up about Dr. King. Mrs. King wrote back and thanked my sister for sending her this poem or letter. Whenever I hear, the Battle Hym of Republic or Presious Lord, I think of Dr. Martin Luther-King Jr. Those were his two most favorite songs. Today people say Dr. King is still alive, in wich he is too me. When I look at a picture of King, I think of him as being my own true brother, who got kill for fighting for what he thought was right. He was fighting for the poor, hoping that some day they will be able to live like other. To have what other have, to have good food to, eat and good clothes to wear. I will never, never for get Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

—a girl from the Southeast (#2034)

—Martin L King I choose him because I enjoyed to read and listen to what he had to say. Instead of fighting for what he taught was right he would try to talk about it. Many did not like him because of what he was trying to do for the Black man. He was in and out of jail because of what he believed in. Martin L King would have freedom marches instead of volient marches. If Dr King believed in this thing strongly enough he would go head and do it if he thought it would help his cause any mybe it would mean a trip to jail.

Many times he had received death treaths but he went right on with what he was doing. Then it happened he was shot on the balncy of his his hotel where he was staying when he was helping the garbage men. After he was shot they took him to hospital but they could not save him. They were to late. At his funeral his body was drawn by a donkey cart. After his death Robert Kennedy tryed to carry on his work, as best he could but as he was running for president he was shot also.

—a girl from the Midwest (#1842)

—Dr Martin Luther King Jr try to help poor people freedom. He march to Washington to talk to the president about the poor people. He won the Noble Peace Pize for the outstanding Negroe. Ater death his wife is still march on for freedom for Black people. She have put a candle on the ground of the White House to show that we want peace. They want the war to stop. She ask the president to stop war oversea. Before his death he said he had been to the promble land. He said he knew that he was going to died. He march from place to place for peace. He wanted Black people to have the right to do what they want to do. Dr Martin Luther King Jr did fight. He had been beat kick call out of name.

—a boy from the Southeast (#1628)

APPENDIX II

Combined Sentences—Answers to Exercise One

1. The hot dogs didn't taste terrible yesterday.
2. I don't love to write.
3. He doesn't work for Standard Oil of New Jersey.
4. She will never go to medical school.
5. It never comes to drink at this water hole at noon.
6. (Many, many sentences are possible here.) The toad suddenly leaped onto the log, darted its tongue at a fly and loudly croaked.
7. Pressure is (was) put on the teachers to teach composition.
8. The students should have been given high grades by the instructors. Or, High grades should have been given to the students by the instructors.
9. What was Carlos eating off the floor?
10. Who has been eating my porridge?
11. There is a cat chasing a dog.
12. Aren't there three cats yowling?
13. Samantha should know that his title is "Your Grace."
14. Fred should know the fact that his title is "Your Grace."
15. He should know his proper title is "Your Grace."
16. She should confess that she stole the cookies from the cookie jar.
17. It is well known that she stole the cookies.

Sentence Combining: More Cues

1. IT-FOR-TO: similar to IT-THAT: IT replaces SOMETHING, FOR introduces the next phrase which becomes an infinitive phrase:

   A. SOMETHING is impossible.
   Fonzie cannot get a date. (IT-FOR-TO)

   B. It is impossible for Fonzie to get a date.

   A. SOMETHING arrived in time.
   Jim opened it on his birthday. (IT-FOR-TO)

   B. It arrived in time for Jim to open on his birthday.

2. WHO WHAT WHERE WHEN HOW HOW TO WHY
   Each of these cues indicates a substitution similar to THAT and THE FACT THAT. SOMETHING cues the place where the WHO, WHAT, etc. clause goes.

   A. SOMETHING suddenly occurred to Carlos.
   His mother might not remember SOMETHING. (IT-THAT)
   He was coming home from camp sometime. (WHEN)

   B. It suddenly occurred to Carlos that his mother might not remember when he was coming home from camp.

3. 'S + (a word) + OF: indicates a combination which necessitates changes in word endings. 'S indicates that a word is to go into its possessive form.

A. SOMETHING sent vacationers to the mountains.
Hollywood filmed "Jaws." ('S + FILMING + OF)

B. Hollywood's filming of "Jaws" sent vacationers to the mountains.

A. A debate rages over SOMETHING.
A Federal judge ordered bussing in Boston. ('S + ORDER + OF)

B. A debate rages over a federal judge's order of bussing in Boston.

4. 'S + ING: indicates that one word is changed into the possessive form and that the next word gets an -ing ending:

A. SOMETHING brought down the house.
Brant danced with heavy shoes ('S + ING)

B. Brant's dancing with heavy shoes brought down the house.

5. ⋈ indicates that a word needs changing from adverb to adjective. Usually this cue is part of a series of changes:

A. SOMETHING surprised Celeste.
Her elder son danced gracefully. ('S + ⋈ + ING)

B. Her elder son's graceful dancing surprised Celeste.

6. WHICH WHO WHOM WHOSE WHEN WHERE WHY
can indicate that one of these words should be substituted for a word repeated in both sentences.

A. King Kong knocked over the building.
The building stood at 42nd and Broadway. (WHICH/THAT)

B. King Kong knocked over the building that stood at 42nd and Broadway.

In this example "the building" is the repeated word which the student eliminates and for which he substitutes "that."

A. I enjoy old photographs of my father.
My father came from Arizona by wagon in 1908. (WHO)

B. I enjoy old photographs of my father, who came to Arizona by wagon in 1908.

In this example, "my father" is the repeated phrase which is replaced by "who."

A. The roof caved in Monday.
Monday a tree fell on the house. (WHEN)

B. The roof caved in Monday when a tree fell on the house.

7. Underlined words indicate which part of a sentence to combine. Eliminate any repeated words and any related part of the verb "to be"; then, insert what remains (the underlined or italicized words) after the first appearance of the repeated words.

A. President Carter got out of the limousine and walked.
President Carter was *tired of his distance from the crowd.*

The limousine was *surrounded by secret-service agents.*

The secret-service agents were *wearing dark glasses.*

President Carter walked *to the White House.*

B. President Carter, tired of his distance from the crowd, got out of his limousine surrounded by secret-service agents wearing dark glasses and walked to the White House.

In the first two sentences, we eliminated the repeated words, "President Carter," and the form "to be"; then immediately after the first appearance of the repeated words, we inserted the italicized phrase *tired of his distance from the crowd.* We followed the same process throughout.

Here is a *second set of exercises* which uses the cues above. Again, try out your own combinations, let your ear guide you, and compare your B sentences to ours which follow.

Sentence Combining: Exercises #2

1. A. SOMETHING made the conductor believe SOMETHING.
   The orchestra was on strike. (THE FACT THAT)
   The concert would be cancelled. (THAT)
   B. _____

2. A. All the ticket holders wondered SOMETHING.
   The orchestra had gone on strike for some reason. (WHY)
   B. _____

3. A. SOMETHING bothered the orchestra.
   Their low pay suggested something. (WHAT)
   B. _____

4. A. All the musicians have learned SOMETHING.
   Contracts are negotiated somehow. (HOW)
   B. _____

5. A. The maestro discovered SOMETHING.
   The strike leaders would meet in El Cerrito sometime (WHEN)
   B. _____

6. A. SOMETHING seemed long ago.
   Something happened. (WHAT)
   B. _____

7. A. SOMETHING is not clear to me.
   Manuel would tell you SOMETHING for some reason. (IT-WHY)
   Funeral directors know something. (THAT)
   Someone solves grave problems. (HOW TO) (from O'Hare)
   B. _____

8. A. SOMETHING took real courage.
   Senator Phoggbound asserted SOMETHING. (IT-FOR-TO)
   He didn't care (about) SOMETHING. (THAT)
   The voters thought something of him. (WHAT) (from O'Hare)

   B. _____

9. A. The cat leaps over the lazy dog.
   The cat is *a mother of four soft, furry kittens.*

   B. _____

10. A. The cat leaps over the lazy dog.
   The dog is *sleeping soundly beneath the apple tree.*
   The apple tree is *in blossom early this year because of the unseasonable warm weather.*

   B. _____

Answers to Exercise Two:

1. The fact that the orchestra was on strike made the conductor believe that the concert would be cancelled.
2. All the ticket holders wondered why the orchestra had gone on strike.
3. What their low pay suggested bothered the orchestra.
4. All the musicians have learned how contracts are negotiated.
5. The maestro discovered when the strike leaders would meet in El Cerrito.
6. What happened seemed long ago.
7. It is not clear to me why Manuel would tell you that funeral directors know how to solve grave problems.
8. It took real courage for Senator Phoggbound to assert that he didn't care what the voters thought of him.
9. The cat, a mother of four soft, furry kittens, leaps over the lazy dog.
10. The cat leaps over the lazy dog sleeping soundly beneath the apple tree in blossom early this year because of the unseasonable warm weather.

Final Cues

Here are the final cues for sentence combining.

1. _____: if only one word is italicized, that word usually precedes the first appearance of the repeated words:

   A. He got out of the limousine.
   The limousine was *black.*
   B. He got out of the black limousine.

2. AND: indicates that two sentences are to be combined with "and."

3. , indicates that a comma is necessary in the combination.

   A. Joe ate tuna.
   Mary ate salmon. (,AND)
   B. Joe ate tuna, and Mary ate salmon.

4. X: indicates that a word is eliminated.

   A. She changed her clothes.
      She changed her mind. (AND)
   B. She changed her clothes and her mind.

5. BEFORE: these and other connecting words are simply attached to the base sentence
   IF and the result is added to the beginning of the following sentence or to the
   etc. end of the preceding one. Other connecting words are "after," "since," "as soon as," "when," "just when," "although," "once," and "long before."

   A. Everything has happened to her. (EVEN THOUGH)
      She keeps the respect of the entire nation.
   B. Even though everything has happened to her, she keeps the respect of the entire nation.

6. ING: these indicate other combinations:
   WITH

   A. Lear dropped to his knees. (ING)
      Lear asked her forgiveness.
   B. Dropping to his knees, Lear asked her forgiveness.

   A. *Her mind* was *gone* (WITH)
      She drowned in the river.
      She *sang of country matters.* (ING)
   B. With her mind gone, she drowned in the river singing of country matters.

7. : these cues indicate two other ways to combine sentences in your spare time just as -- professional writers do -- and in the privacy of your own home.

8. . . .-- This cue indicates that a second dash follows the base sentence:

   A. Her life looked happy. (ALTHOUGH)
      She had a *mansion.* (--)
      She had *servants.*
      She had *charge accounts.*
      She had *lovers.* (AND)
      Her lovers *were ballet dancers.* (WHO + . . . --)
      She was wretched.
      Longed for her life in the convent. (AND)
      That life was *lost.*

   B. Although her life looked happy--mansion, servants, charge accounts, and lovers who were famous ballet dancers--she was wretched and longed for her lost life in the convent.

Here is a final set of exercises. Our B sentences follow.

Sentence Combining: Exercise #3

1. A. The cat leaped over the dog.
      The cat was *black.*
      The dog was *lazy.*

   B. _____

2. A. She read *Watership Down*. (SINCE + ING)
   She refuses to eat rabbit stew.

   B. _____.

3. A. She read *Rabbit Hill*, (IF)
   She would put a statue of St. Francis in her garden.

   B. _____.

4. A. My dog has learned SOMETHING.
   My dog is *a labrador retriever*.
   Someone was born at Happy Puppy Farm. (WHO)
   He should never tease a weasel. (THAT)

   B. _____.

5. A. The seventh graders could not understand SOMETHING.
   The seventh graders *had worked hard on their assignments*. (WHO)
   The assignments were *English*.
   They had worked *all year*.
   Their teacher had assigned two reports for some reason. (WHY)
   Their reports were *written*.
   The reports were *per week*.
   The reports were *on some novels*.
   The novels were *boring*.
   The novels would make SOMETHING impossible. (WHICH/THAT)
   They would enjoy fully their summer vacation. (IT-FOR-TO) (from O'Hare)

   B. _____.
   _____.
   _____.

6. A. Superman *leaped over tall buildings*. (ING)
   Superman got to the scene in time to meet Lois.

   B. _____.

7. A. His nose was as sharp as a pin.
   His nose had a *slight hook at the end*. (WITH)

   B. _____.

8. A. *Her dog* was *in the front seat*. (WITH)
   She couldn't see to her right.

   B. _____.

Answers to Exercise #3

1. The black cat leaped over the lazy dog.
2. Since reading *Watership Down*, she refuses to eat rabbit stew.
3. If she read *Rabbit Hill*, she would put a statue of St. Francis in her garden.
4. My dog, a labrador retriever who was born at Happy Puppy Farm, has learned that he should never tease a weasel.

5. The seventh graders who had worked hard all year on their English assignments could not understand why their teacher had assigned two written reports per week on some boring novels which would make it impossible for them to enjoy fully their summer vacation.
6. Leaping over tall buildings, Superman got to the scene in time to meet Lois.
7. His nose was as sharp as a pin with a slight hook at the end.
8. With her dog in the front seat she couldn't see to her right.

APPENDIX III

DISCOVERING THE CHRISTENSEN RHETORIC

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From the start I wanted to teach writing; that is, from the moment fate and an excess of English credits dictated I should major in English and consequently become a teacher. My problem, not an uncommon one, was that I had been given very little instruction on how to teach writing, so when it came time for me to actually teach writing I was bewildered. All those fine discussions of Hemingway's crisp elegance and Faulkner's complicated sophistication prepared me not one bit to confront a classroom full of ninth-graders who giggled at the mere mention of a dangling participle.

Two bits of information sustained me during those first few months of my first year: "to write well, one must write a lot" and "formal grammar instruction does not improve student writing." We had great fun, my students and I, role-playing then writing, discussing revelant issues then writing, watching movies then writing, taking walks around campus then writing, interviewing interesting people then writing. Then, at year's end, I was confronted with the unpleasant realization that my students wrote about as well as they had at the beginning. "More instruction," I reasoned, "on how to structure all that data."

I discovered Sheriden Baker's *Practical Stylist:* controlling thesis statement, argumentative edge, a fixed formula for exposition a child could learn. I still flinch when I think of those essays, perfectly structured little gems devoid of thought, ideas divorced from relevant evidence or experience, sentences shaped, I am sure, with picks and shovels. Ideas, my students seemed to imply, came from heaven and supporting evidence was anything that popped into their heads during the act of composition: "Capital punishment is immoral because only God can make a tree."

I swore off teaching writing for awhile after that, filling up the hours with literature, semantics, vocabulary, spelling, rock poetry and movies. I occasionally forgot to pick up my pay check during this time, my integrity having retreated into unconsciousness.

Ken Macrorie published a couple of books on teaching writing or I might have become a wealthy plumber. From him I learned an approach to teaching writing that got results and a couple of truisms that might actually be true: "to write well, one must write about something he is very familiar with" and "writing must have an authentic voice." Using his method of discovering bits of quality among heaps of personal experience writing, I found my students produced writing I actually enjoyed reading. Few papers were as polished as I wanted, it is true, but the ragged efforts were real and said something about the world as seen from a real person's point of view. And when James Moffett began to make his influence felt in the schools, I understood why Macrorie's approach worked. The students were telling what they knew with the tool they used for knowing, their own language. More than anything, though, Moffett reminded me that writing as a form of communication requires an audience and the teacher-evaluator does not make a good audience. Since Moffett, I've never assigned a paper without assigning an audience, usually a small group of students.

I enjoyed reading my students' personal experience papers and they enjoyed reading the papers written by their friends, but there still remained the problem of language usage. No matter how much I had my students write, or how much I had them experiment with their language, they still wrote dull sentences and still could not include the kind of specifics I wanted to see. I tried transformational grammar, against my better judgment, but to no avail. I tried précis writing and various kinds of imitation, all to no avail. I decided, finally, that syntactical sophistication was beyond the ability of a normal junior high school student.

I had heard of Francis Christensen's rhetoric, and I had watched a colleague fail miserably when he tried to teach it to some of his students. Still, when a new young teacher appeared at the school with a packet of materials and unrestrained enthusiasm for Christensen, I thought I'd give it a try. I liked it, not because it solved my students' syntax problems, but because it taught me more about the English sentence than I'd learned in all my university classes combined. Using the Christensen method of imitating professional models, I was able to get my students to produce long, complicated fragments and run-on sentences. I locked up my Christensen material and threatened death to anyone who dared to show it to my students.

I could not help but remain intrigued by the ease with which I could imitate and generate cumulative sentences. I accepted Christensen's conviction that most modern writers used the cumulative sentence more than any other type, and I wanted my students to include the kind of specifics in their writing that this style of sentence made possible.

And then the epiphany. I was helping a colleague, a foreign language teacher, prepare some drills for a French class when I noticed she had several pages of exercises that covered a rather simple grammar point. I realized that she was feeding the students their learning in much smaller bites than I, and was letting them chew on each bite for a longer period of time. Christensen had not worked because I had tried to teach too much at one time. I returned to my Christensen material in the fall and vowed to skip no steps.

My students and I examined one sentence at a time, using professional writers as source material, first the base clause, the noun and verb, then the adjective cluster, then the noun cluster, and so on until we had thoroughly examined every element of the cumulative sentence. At each step we would analyze and imitate, replacing one part of a sentence with a similar structure, then the entire sentence with our own, using structures identical to the original. Once we could imitate a given sentence element, we would write on a static experience, a picture or a person in the classroom, practicing again and again each sentence element. Finally, to the world to use our new found structure in real writing situations. When one element was mastered, we would do another, building an archetypal sentence which contained every kind of modifier possible in the language in every possible location, always applying our new knowledge to weekly writing assignments, so that the realization that sentences appear in context was never lost.

You can imagine what some of the sentences looked like during the early stages, sentence after sentence with the same kind of modifiers around the subject, an adjective, a past participle, a present participle, a relative clause and a prepositional phrase for each noun. The papers written during the developing stages were not much fun to read, as you might expect. And always I had to talk to each student separately to get the concept across while the others were rioting in the corners and my legs grew weary from running.

By year's end, however, the pieces came together and my students were producing not only acrobatic sentences with half a dozen absolutes but some nicely crafted sentences with some exciting modifiers. They ran madly about campus showing their sentences to their former teachers and future teachers, anyone who would listen. Their enthusiasm, and mine too, was a bit extreme. Syntactical sophistication is not equal to good writing, and there is a good deal more to write about in schools than personal experiences. It is a good place to start, however, and a good foundation for writing the kind of papers they will be asked to write as they go through their remaining years of school.

Since my first success with the Christensen rhetoric, I have added a foundation step, please forgive me, grammar - - not conventional grammar, but grammar as presented by George Green in *College Horn Book #1*. Green's grammar is a streamlined system designed to lead into Christensen's rhetoric. I have found that students can learn it and that it speeds up the process of learning.

The final word on what students can do with the Christensen rhetoric should come from a student. Here is a sentence taken from an eighth grade girl accustomed to getting C's in English:

> The gun went off, piercing the runners' ears as they started down the straight away, legs lifting high, bodies swaying with the switching of each leg, hair blowing in all directions, arms pumping, feet pounding, gusts of dirt rising from underneath their feet, shirts blowing in the wind as they turn the corner of the track and head toward the finish line, feet pounding harder, hearts vibrating through their bodies as they attack the string, taut across the track, slowing finally to walk as they all turn to the judges to get their times.

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The manuscript prospered under the editing of Paula Skene and Donna Cole of the Instructional Lab. In that same office, Anne Fischler and Carmel Zimmerman turned straw into gold.

Marilyn Buckley and Robert Ruddell gave me a good sense of some of the ways reading and writing connect, and Gerard Poirier, also of UCB's School of Education, provided me a forum to test a few ideas. This book is the better for their teaching.

Jim Gray encouraged the project from its start, and, of course, he, Miles Myers, and Cap Lavin provided the context for the entire work in their wonderful Bay Area Writing Project.

Early in my work, it seemed essential for me to present—within an elementary school framework—the approaches of Bay Area Writing Project teachers. So I read through hundreds of pages of notes, writing samples, philosophical statements and classroom assignments which I had collected during the 1976 summer BAWP seminars. Seeing myself as an editor as well as a writer was the most important decision I made in beginning this book.

The following publishers or individuals have kindly given permission to reprint selected material:

Dell Publishing Co.: From *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* by Elizabeth George Speare.

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This account of New Zealand's famous teacher's year in Colorado contains useful descriptions of her organic-writing approach and samples of the writing of very young children.

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Available through National Council of the Teachers of English. Ideas, teachers' reflections, student writing, assignments, and a bibliography all assist teachers and students to begin enjoyable writing activities.

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Haggitt, Eileen M. *Projects in the Primary School.* London: Longman, 1975.

Ms. Haggitt walks her reader through sixteen different themes. After a few examples of organizing all of a day or a week's activities around one theme, the reader can go on to design projects centered on almost anything: balloons, shamrocks, crossbows, dinosaurs, eggs, or candles.

Haggitt, T.W. *Working with Language.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967.

Yet another British book on the value of writing as a tool for thinking about almost any subject. Haggitt's description of repeated field trips to the same place is a masterful account of learning given a second and third chance.

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Writing under a felicitous pseudonym, popular lecturer and master teacher, Joan Cheifetz, offers twenty-six language arts activities, one for each letter of the alphabet. Most activities spring from the timber of good children's literature, and all of the activities depend on a teacher's enthusiastic response to children's effort.

Koch, Kenneth. *Wishes, Lies, and Dreams: Teaching Children to Write Poetry.* New York: Vintage, 1970.

Koch, a New York poet, interests children in writing poetry by giving them structures which almost insure success. The book includes an essay, "Teaching Children to Write Poetry," and many pages of children's poems. Koch emphasizes collaborative poems as well as poetry by individual children.

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See Chapter 5 of this book for a discussion of Moffett's work. *Discourse* is the more theortical work, and it includes a summary of Moffett's first book, *Drama: What Is Happening?*

National Assessment of Educational Progress. *Selected Essays and Letters: A Selection of Papers Collected During the 1969-70 Assessment of Writing, Report 10.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, November, 1972.

This 1000-page document includes the transcriptions of thousands of essays by 9-, 13-, 17-year old and adult writers. Essays are ordered from weak to typical to strong, and demographic data for each writer is provided.

_____. *Writing Mechanics, 1969-1974: A Capsule Description of Changes in Writing Mechanics.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, October, 1975.

This brief report summarizes in narrative and statistical form the changes in writing mechanics of 17-, 13-, and 9-year old students from 1969 to 1974.

Appendix I summarizes the National Assessment's writing assessment.

O'Hare, Frank. *Sentence Combining: Improving Student Writing Without Formal Grammar Instruction.* Urbana, Illinois: N.C.T.E., 1973.

This study was O'Hare's dissertation. It reviews recent research on grammar and writing, presents the methodology called sentence combining (see chapter 4 of this book), and gives the results of O'Hare's own research. A key to his method is that it dispenses with traditional grammar instruction.

Salas, Floyd, ed. *I Write What I Want.* San Francisco: Poetry in the Schools, 1974.

Numerous samples of student writing fill this book. Also included are a few photographs of children writing, talking, and mugging, and a few reflections by teachers who have taught writing in elementary and secondary schools.

Sealey, L.G.W. and Vivian Gibbon. *Communication and Learning in the Primary School.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962.

If you must worship the British Infant School, do it with the help of this excellent and detailed account of the curriculum possibilities in classrooms that value the talk and writing of young children. Writing is never limited here to either "creative" or book-report time.

In footnotes and in the narrative throughout the text I have discussed other important works on composition: those of Josephine Miles, Francis Christensen, Walker Gibson, and Kenneth Macrorie are most important (see Chapter 6). Footnotes cite Robert Ruddell and Kate Blickhahn. George Green gestures to Paul Roberts' work and Bob Miller applauds George Green's book. This bibliography is by no means complete, but it does suggest places to go for more of what is in this book and for some of what I have excluded.

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